

## **Where Do You Run** by milevenreddie

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

**Genre:** Humor, Romance

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.

**Pairings:** Eleven/Jane H./Mike W.

**Status:** In-Progress

**Published:** 2018-06-15 14:32:49

**Updated:** 2019-07-17 21:45:11

**Packaged:** 2019-12-12 19:01:09

**Rating:** T

**Chapters:** 39

**Words:** 80,329

**Publisher:** www.fanfiction.net

**Summary:** Jane "Eleven" Hopper needs a place to stay, ASAP, and none other than her soon to be step brother Will Byers helps her out. El definitely didn't expect to be moving into a house with five other people, let alone fall in love with the tall, curly haired musician. Modern day, college AU (Originally posted on AO3.)

## 1. Chapter 1

Wednesday, September 6, 2017

*I cannot believe I'm actually doing this. El thought as she walked down the street. I'm known for being socially awkward, shy and quiet, how in the hell am I supposed to do this without looking like an idiot?*

She was on her way to 011 Mineral Springs Street, which, was coincidentally her high school nickname, to see if she could rent a room from them. She needed somewhere to stay and fast as her roommate got pregnant and moved her boyfriend and his *other two kids* in, and she was absolutely *not* having it. Oh, and the new semester/quarter starts in three weeks, so she's screwed if she can't find anywhere to stay soon.

On her way to hunt down the cheapest apartments she could, her soon to be step-brother Will texted her, and told her the house he'd been staying in the last couple months with his friends had a room available, and that he would talk to his friends for her. He ended up giving her the address, which is how she ended up there. She had never been there before, considering it's a side of town she's never gone to, and to say she was surprised was an understatement.

When she finally reached the house, she couldn't help but notice how beautiful it was. It was a two story house, that had a *three* car garage. The front yard was huge, and she could only imagine how big the backyard was. She walked down the brick path leading up to the steps carefully, also known for being clumsy, especially when it came to hard surfaces.

Walking up the steps, she took a deep breath and knocked on the door. The door opened a few seconds later to reveal a redhead with long, wavy hair.

"Who the fuck are you?" She asked

"I, um, I'm Will's sister? I'm not sure if he's talked to you or not, but-." El said, but got interrupted,

"Yes!"

"He gave me the address." She finished lamely.

"Come on in and I'll interview you." The redhead told her, motioning for her to come in.

The living room was bigger than she expected. There was an L shaped couch, a recliner, and two comfy looking armchairs spread out around a coffee table, a flat screen TV hung on the wall above a *fireplace*.

"I'm Max." She said, holding out her hand after she shut the door. El shook it, smiling at her.

"El."

"Sorry if I seem a little bitchy, I just woke up a little while ago." Max said sheepishly. "You can sit down." She gestured to the couch. El sat down, sitting her bag on the floor next to her feet. "So, what do you do?"

"Um, I work as a waitress down at Benny's."

"Okay. Are you clean?" El nodded. "You can help us pay the bills, correct?"

"Of course. I can cook, clean-"

"You had me at cook." Max said. "You go to the University of Chicago?" El nodded. "What do you major in?"

"Photography, I'm a junior." She replied. She asked her a couple more questions, like why she was majoring in photography, how old she was, what her roommate had been like, and a bunch of other questions that El doesn't even remember.

"Well, you seem too sweet to be a serial killer." Max said finally, crossing her arms. El chuckled. "Do you have any questions? Or have anything we should probably know about? Like asthma or any serious allergies?" Max continued. El shook her head.

"No asthma or allergies. Um, so Will said that a room opened up, and, considering the house is a pretty decent size, er, how many people live here exactly?" She asked, fiddling with her hands.

"Well, before the room opened up, six." Max told her.

"Oh okay, are some of you guys you know, related? Or do you just know each other?

"No, no. We've all known each other since middle. I'm the only girl here. Mike's grandparents own the place." Max told her. "He's a junior too, well hell, all of us here are juniors actually, except for the bitch we kicked out. She was a freshman and crazy as fuck." They talked for a few more minutes and Max finally said,

"So, I think you should move in. That is, if you're okay dealing with a bunch of twenty one year old dudes."

"Wait, shouldn't the guys get a say in this?" She snorted.

"I don't trust them enough for that, actually. They're the reason the other girl was even here. They have bad judgement on some things, so they let me have the reigns this time."

"Oh." El laughed. "When is a good time?" She asked.

"You can start moving in today if you want. Oh, and, uh, you'll be sharing with Mike if that's okay." She said. El raised an eyebrow. "It's the only free bed now. I share with Lucas, we're together, and Will and Dustin share a room. The house originally had four rooms but we turned one of them into a little library nook type of thing."

"Oh, that's fine, as long as he's not all disgusting and gross or anything." Max shook her head.

"Nah, he's the complete opposite. His room is always clean. Plus, it's the master so you'll be sharing a bathroom but it's pretty big so it's worth it."

"Thank God, I'm so ready to get away from my room-old roommate." El grinned happily.

"Ooh, drama! Me likey!" Max said, laughing at the face El made.

"Do you need any help moving?" She asked. "Because I can come help if you'd like."

"I actually have most of my stuff in my car." El said cheekily. "I just have a few extra things to pack, but thank you though. Are you sure it's okay to come today?"

"Of course!" Max waved her off. "Will and Lucas will probably be here by the time you get back."

"Oh that's fine. I'll probably make a fool of myself then too, you might not want me living here after that." She joked, standing up and grabbing her bag. Max snorted.

"Don't even worry about it. The guys are straight up fools so it's nothing new." She told her. El grinned and nodded. "Hey, let me see your phone, I'll put my number in so you can text when you get here. We'll come help get your stuff." El handed her her phone and Max put her number in, then sent herself a text. She gave it back to El, who put it in her back pocket.

"I'll see you soon then, yeah?" Max nodded and waved to her as she left, shutting the door behind her quietly. She did a little happy dance when she saw that no one was around to see her. She all but ran down the steps and onto the side walk and went to where she parked her car down the road. She got in and blasted the music all the way back to her old apartment.

She didn't have that much stuff in the apartment, she never had. Mainly clothes and a couple pictures, a lamp in her bedroom and the bed sheets and pillows. That was it. When she got there, she was relieved to be *alone* for the first time since she came back from Hawkins. She immediately yanked the covers and sheets off her bed, folding them as neatly as possible and stuffing them in a trash bag. She did the same with the few shirts and pants and undergarments she had kept out, and grabbed her two pillows. She took them out to the car and then went back to put the lamp and pictures in a box. After double checking everything, she grabbed a piece of paper and pen, and wrote a note to Tiffany.

*Well, I'm out! The kids can take my old room. If you need me, you know my number. Good luck with the new baby and the kids. I'm locking back up and sliding the key back under the door. :)*

*Love, El*

Tiffany, by all means, was *not* her best friend, and never was, but they'd known each other since Freshman year and were good friends, but that doesn't mean El had to stay with her and take care of some other chicks kids while she and her boyfriend went out having fun. She put the note on the counter where it would easily be seen, and left, grabbing the box on her way out.

After stuffing the box in the back seat, she sent Max a text.

(4:31 PM) El- Hey! I'm otw back, I'll be there in about twenty minutes!

(4:31) Max- Okay, sweet! Will and Lucas are here, so we'll make them bring everything in XD

(4:31) El- Lmao awesome XD

(4:33)Max- I'll open one of the garage doors and you can park in there :)

(4:33) El- Is that okay? I don't want to take someone else's spot.

(4:34) Max- Oh yeah, it's fine! out of the five of us, we only got 2 cars lmao.

(4:35) El- Oh okay, well awesome! I'll see you soon!

(4:35) Max- Be careful!

El smiled and sent back a heart emoji and tossed her phone in the passenger seat, and was back on her way to her *house*. She couldn't believe she didn't make a fool of herself, although she probably did go a bit too in detail about certain things, which she just giggled about, thinking about them. They'll probably think she's crazy once they get to know her. Then the most random thought struck her, well, maybe not the *most* random.

*I wonder if Mike's hot?*

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After she texted El, Max made herself something to eat and decided to text the group chat, informing them they had a new housemate.

### **The Par-tayy**

(4:53 PM) Zoomer- Yo nerds, we gots a new housemate  
(4:53) Zoomer- Mikey boy ur gonna looove me!

(4:53) Magic Mike- Oh jeez, why?

(4:54) Willy Will- Omg did you like El? Is she moving in?

(4:54) Dusty- Whom tf is El?

(4:56) Willy Will- My soon-to-be step sister. She needed a place to stay so I told her the address.

(4:56) Zoomer- correct! I made sure she wasn't like, a secret serial killer or anything and I like her. She's a lil awkward but it's cute. She's also pretty damn hot if I say so myself, Mikey ;)

(4:57) Stalker- Oh shit do i have anything to worry about w her, Max?

(4:57) Zoomer- lmao no stalker

(5:00) Magic Mike- why do i love you? i'm confused

(5:02) Zoomer- because ur gonna have a hot girl as a roommate, duh

(5:05) Magic Mike- Oh

(5:05) Magic Mike- frick you Max don't try and set me up with her

(5:07) Dusty- Yeah the last time that happened didn't end well

(5:07) Zoomer- oh stfu no one said anything about setting anyone up. wait til you see her tho, you'll be head over heels for her. bet

(5:12) Willy Will- ok id rather u NOT call my sister hot, but she is beautiful.

(5:13) Magic Mike- yeah yeah, i gtg, Holly is attempting to BRAID my hair and I need to go pack

(5:13) Zoomer- lmao i love holly

## **2. Chapter 2**

Just like she said, Max had opened one of the garage doors, so she parked carefully, and almost jumped out of her skin when she saw Will sitting on the hood of his car, with a cute, dark skinned boy sitting next to him.

"Will!" El exclaimed, jumping out and hugging him tightly.

"El! Why didn't you text me?" He asked, hugging her back.

"I thought I did? Oops." He snorted and let her go. He gestured to the guy and said,

"El, this is Lucas. This is El, my sister." Lucas gave her a grin and held out a hand.

"It's nice to meet you, El." He said, shaking her hand.

"Likewise."

"So! Let's start moving you in, huh? You're on the second floor so be careful." Will told her, wiggling his eyebrows. She snorted.

"It could be one step, Will, and I'd break a bone."

"I know." He chuckled. She grabbed the box with the lamp and pictures. Will grabbed her bag of bed sheets and Lucas picked up two boxes out of the trunk. Will held the door open for her and she grinned at him, and then smiled at Max, who was in the kitchen.

"Boys, go get the rest of her stuff while I show her around." Max said, clapping her hands and pointing towards the garage door. They went without question, and El giggled. Max had changed out of the T-shirt and sweat pants she had on earlier and into a pair of jean shorts and a red tank top, her hair pulled back in a ponytail. She grabbed her wrist and pulled her down the hall.

"So, obviously that was the kitchen, I'll go into detail with that later." She told her, and El smiled. "That's the living room, which you've seen already. This is the dining room, this is one of the half

bathrooms. It's the only bathroom on this floor. This is our little library nook, thanks to Steve and his handy-ness with a hammer and screwdriver." El giggled quietly as Max showed her each room.

She showed her each room, which were all about the same size and had the same lay out. Her and Lucas' shared room had a half bathroom, and there was a full bathroom in the hall. Will and Dustin's didn't, but that just made their closet bigger.

They went back downstairs as the boys continued bringing her stuff up. She had managed to put eight boxes of clothes in the trunk of her car, they weren't *that* big, and everything else, like shoes and makeup, were in the backseat.

"I'll show you your room last, so you can start settling in." Max explained, noticing the confused look on El's face. She nodded. "So, this is technically the last part of the tour, other than the backyard, which I'll show you later, once you're settled in. When everyone's all home, we're all gonna go chill and jam." Max told her. El raised an eyebrow, and nodded, following her down to a *basement*.

*Jesus Christ, this is the best room in the house!*

"Wow." That was all she could say as she stared at all the instruments. There were four guitars hanging up on the wall, a piano, a drum set, and a damn *ukulele* with the guitars. There were two giant beanbags thrown in the corner, a couch against the wall, and a table with six chairs sitting in the middle. "This is fucking insane-Oops, sorry." Max snorted.

"Don't worry girl, we're all potty mouths. It is pretty cool though, isn't it?" El nodded. "Mike's grandparents are *loaded* and so are his parents, but they're kinda shitty so... Yeah. Mike is kinda spoiled, right along with his older and younger sister." El nodded in understanding. "You're welcome down here anytime you want, there's usually at least one person down here during the day. We all love music, whether it's just music itself, singing or playing an instrument."

"I think this'll be my favorite place." El said, smiling at her.

"Mine too." Max smiled back. "Let's go back up, I can help you unpack

if you want?"

"Oh you don't have to. I don't want to be a bother."

"You're fine! I would be spending time with Lucas but he's going grocery shopping, and I hate that, so I'm not going anywhere near Wal-mart." El snorted.

"Just about every piece of clothing I own is from Wal-mart." Max sighed, nodding.

"Same. I'd rather go to the mall though. Have you been to the mall around here? If not, then you're *not living*." El giggled. The conversation flowed between them as they went back to the main floor, and then to the second, where Will was waiting on El's new bed. She started laughing at the pose he'd been making.

"You dumbass, what the hell." She said, tossing a pillow at him. He laughed and shrugged, sitting up.

"Want me to help unpack?" He asked.

"You can as long as you don't break anything." She gave him a pointed look. He raised his hands in surrender.

"I won't!" She winked at him and he snorted. The three got to work, unboxing all her clothes. She let them focus on her shirts and pants while she refolded her undergarments and put them in the dresser that had been in her room. The room was a decent size, probably three sizes bigger than the one she'd had at the apartment.

Max had been right, Mike was clean. His bed was made neatly, and his desk, which was next to the bedroom door, had a cup with pencils and pens, a stack of paper and a few books stacked on top of each other in the middle. She looked at his side of the room carefully, as she folded a random shirt. She was pretty sure he had a king sized bed considering how big it was, and there was a bedside table next to it that had the exact same lamp she did. She giggled a little at that. There was a dresser on the other right side of the desk. There was a smaller flat screen sitting on top of it, and finally, a closet.

There was a window between them, another table across from his

and then her bed. Her bed was closer to the bathroom, and a dresser the same size as his to the left of it. There were a couple comic books laid out on top of his dresser, next to a pretty hefty stack of movies. There were movie posters almost covering the entire wall on his side.

"There's a closet in the bathroom." Max told her. "I don't know why, exactly, but there is, and it's empty so it's yours now." El snorted and nodded.

"You had a box solely dedicated to hangers, El, really?" Will asked, tossing one at her. It hit her butt and she scowled at him, throwing it back at him as Max hung up one of her dresses. Will snorted.

"Yes, I did, William." She stuck her tongue out at him. After she finished filling two of the drawers, she put the sheets on her bed, and then grabbed the box that had her makeup and bathroom essentials in it, and took it in the bathroom. She sat it on the floor and went back to help put the rest of her clothes up.

When they finished, the three sat on her bed, taking a break and talking.

"Thanks for helping me, guys." El told them, smiling.

"I don't think I had a choice." Will mumbled and she hit him with a pillow.

"You offered to help, idiot!" He laughed

"It's not a problem, El, really. I didn't mind at all." El smiled at her again.

"When's Mike and Dustin coming back?" Will asked, laying on his stomach.

"Either late tomorrow night or sometime Friday morning. Mike said he was packing earlier so I'd assume it'd be soon." Max replied.

"Hey, how have I not met them? Aren't you guys like best friends?" El asked.

"You're anti-social as hell, El. That's why." Will said, nudging her foot.

"Oh, true." El shrugged. Max snorted.

"So, Will the Wise, when's your mom and Hop getting hitched?" Max asked

"This spring." El replied when Will looked at her. "Sometime in April, they haven't set an exact date yet."

"Oh yeah, I forgot you were gonna be step-siblings for a second." Max said, tucking a loose strand of hair behind her ear.

"Sadly." El sighed, mocking annoyance. Will glared at her and she laughed. "I'm kidding, dude, I love you." He just rolled his eyes and she snorted.

"Love you too." He replied. "Sometimes." She chuckled.

"You were adopted, right?" Max asked her. El nodded.

"Yep, Hop adopted me when I was twelve."

"Wait, I thought you were eleven?" Will said, confused.

"That was just my nickname, idiot." She said, thumping his leg.

"Your nickname is Eleven? Is that where El comes from?" Max asked. She nodded.

"My actual name is Jane Hopper."

"Where'd the nickname come from?" Max asked.

"Because I was born on the eleventh day of the eleventh month."

"Oh! Cool!" They talked for a little while longer, and El decided to ask,

"So, this Mike guy." She started, "Is he hot?" The two laughed and El raised an eyebrow.

"Oh, you were serious? Well, I mean, I'm taken so..." Max shrugged. "He is good looking, I'll say that."

"He's tall as shit, like six three or something. Fucking giraffe looking ass." El snorted.

"Here." Max said, handing her her phone. There was a picture of two guys, arms wrapped around each other's shoulders. "That's Mike, and this is Dustin." He was a head taller than the other guy. Both of them had curly hair, and once El got a good look at them, she realized she knew who they were.

*Mike is pretty hot though.*

"Hey! They're the guys that sing at those concerts." She said, looking at them. They nodded.

"I didn't know you went to those concerts?" Will asked.

"I mean, I didn't go willingly, Tiffany dragged me to a couple of them. They were pretty good, that explains the basement." They laughed.

"Yeah, they're both majoring in music. All of us are into music just not as much as them."

"I think it's cool. If I didn't like photography so much, I'd probably major in music too."

"It's true, she sings hella good. I blame Jonathan for getting her into photography though." El rolled her eyes.

"I'm not *that* good."

"Bullshit." He nudged her and she rolled her eyes.

"Anyways." She nudged him back. "Could one of you ask Mike if it's okay to use one of the drawers in the bathroom?"

"Why don't I add you to the group chat? Then you could ask him." Max suggested. "I'm not saying that to be a bitch, I just wanna add you anyways." El snorted and nodded. "Also, I'm changing your name to Eleven."

"Okay."

## The Par-tayy

(Zoomer added Eleven to the chat)

(6:23 PM) Zoomer- Mike, Dustin, meet El. El, meet those two nerds.

(6:23) Dusty- Hi El! Mike can't come to the phone right now, his little sister just kneed him in the balls.

(6:24) Eleven- Hi! Oh, wow, okay lmao

(6:25) Stalker- what he do to deserve that?

(6:25) Dusty- there are multiple things he could have done, all I know is I was coming in from the kitchen because I heard him yell

(6:26) Dusty- and I saw him in the fetal position on the floor while Holly laughed.

(6:26) Dusty- Rip Mike Wheelers balls, he will have no children at this rate

(6:27) Eleven- LMAO XD

(6:27) Willy Will- well then, rip

(6:29) Zoomer- you guys are disgusting lmao don't scare El away she hasn't even been here two hours yet.

(6:29) Stalker- fr

(6:37) Magic Mike- Hello, I am here, and I have miraculously survived getting kneed in the balls by my 12 year old sister.

(6:37) Magic Mike- Hi El, I'm sorry about that idiot.

(6:39) Eleven- lol it's all good

(6:39) Eleven- what did you do for her to knee you in the balls

(6:41) Magic Mike- idek tbh

(6:41) Magic Mike- like i was helping her with hw cus you know, Hawkins middle school loves to torture children and give them homework like 2 weeks after school starts

(6:41) Magic Mike- and she crawled over me and kneed me and I saw nothing but black for all of three seconds.

(6:44) Stalker- ouch. sucks to be you man

(6:45) Zoomer- i love holly but she's a demon sometimes i stg

(6:48) Magic Mike- she takes after Nancy

(6:48) Magic Mike- so not looking forward to her being in hs

(6:49) Zoomer- OH

(6:49) Zoomer- El didn't you have a question for Mike

(6:49) Eleven- Lmao yeah

(6:53) Magic Mike- shoot

(6:54) Eleven- is it okay if I use one of the drawers in the bathroom?

(6:57) Magic Mike- oh yeah ofc i only use like one drawer and like 1/4 of the cabinet so have at it

(6:57) Magic Mike- use all of em if you want lmao

(6:58) Eleven- okay awesome ty :)

(6:58) Magic Mike- no problem :)

(7:02) Willy Will- So Mike, it escalated pretty quickly, huh?

(7:02) Magic Mike- what did

(7:03) Zoomer- i stg mike you idiot

(7:04) Willy Will- how Holly was braiding your hair earlier and then kneed you in the balls

(7:06) Magic Mike- Oh

(7:06) Magic Mike- stfu max lmao

(7:08) Magic Mike- Also, can we NOT talk about my balls anymore. Jesus y'all gon make El wanna leave before me and Dustin even get there

(7:11) Eleven- Lmao nah, this is a shit ton more entertaining than my old roommate(s)

(7:12) Zoomer- Oooh El tell them the drama of ur roommate

(7:16) Dusty- I'm always ready for drama. Hit me w it!

(7:16) Eleven- lmao okay so

(7:17) Eleven- I've lived in the same apartment since freshman year with this girl named tiffany right? Well she's had a couple dif bfs and such and the latest one has two kids

(7:19) Eleven- I've dealt with him and the kids for the last like 5 months, well technically 4 cus i went home for break. I mean they weren't that bad but we only had two (2) rooms, 1 bathroom and a tiny ass kitchen. 5 people being there sucked.

(7:21) Magic Mike- Jesus

(7:21) Eleven- that's not all

(7:22) Eleven- like they didn't live with us until like three weeks ago, they'd stayed the night before but not straight up living there. oh, and get this, she's preggers so i'm like

(7:24) Eleven- no no honey

(7:24) Eleven- after staying there a couple days i packed all my shit and went on the hunt for cheap ass apartments and then will texted me saying y'all had a room available and i'm like sweet so i came and talked to max and now i'm living here :D

(7:26)Eleven- i usually love kids but good god they were both under the age of five and this guy is only 20

(7:29) Dusty- oh my god lord have mercy i'm glad you got away from those things you call children

(7:29) Dusty- i am so sorry you had to deal with that.

(7:30) Eleven- lmao uh, thanks? ig

(7:34) Magic Mike- ignore him he's got a stick up his ass cus kids don't like him

(7:34) Magic Mike- but that does suck at least you don't have to deal with it anymore

(7:35) Stalker- fr that's the worst thing imaginable.

(7:36)Stalker- i mean it'd be different if it was your own kids you know?

(7:36) Eleven- Lmao XD. and yeah it sucks. his baby mama even

came by one day being a bitch

(7:37) Eleven- I almost beat her ass like she almost broke my laptop

(7:37) Zoomer- okay now that's some bullshit

(7:38) Zoomer- like who tf

(7:41) Eleven- ikr! fucking bitch

(7:43) Willy Will- lmao

(7:48) Dusty- gtg Holly has decided she wants to put makeup on mike and he's running from her and i gotta save his ass. ttyl guyssss

### 3. Chapter 3

"So, El, what days do you work?" Lucas asked as he handed her a paper plate. They had ordered pizza for the four of them, since no one felt like cooking.

"I work six to three Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and eleven to seven on Saturdays."

"Hey, that rhymes." Will said with a mouthful of pizza. El snorted.

"Do you like working there?" Max asked. El shrugged, taking two slices of pizza out of the box.

"It's alright, it sucks waking up so early but I deal with it. The worst part is having to deal with Troy's dumbass. It pays pretty good, considering I'm only a waitress. I get a shit ton of tips." They all chuckled. "I love Benny though, he's a big ass teddy bear."

"He really is." Lucas agreed with her.

"He let's us put our trash in the dumpster behind the restaurant." Max said, mouth full of pizza.

"So that's where all the trash comes from, then?" El joked and she snorted, nodding.

"Hey, has Mike said anything about what we're doing for Dustin's birthday Friday?" Lucas asked Max, who nodded.

"I texted him earlier, you know, when Holly wasn't hunting him down trying to put eyeliner all over his face." El snorted. "He said Dustin wants to get wasted for the first time legally at a bar, which is understandable."

"Only you, him, and Will can get in though."

"I know, but Mike doesn't like partying and shit like us either. And don't you have a fake ID?" Max asked Lucas accusingly.

"Yeah but it's so stupid." He whined.

"Do you just not wanna drink?" Max cooed. "Because you can go home and come pick us up." He scowled at her, then made a face.

"Yeah, I really don't want to. Not after what happened last time. You're not twenty one either, right El?"

"Right, and I hate bars. I've gotten in them a couple times and every time people grab my ass. *Every time.*"

"Well, it's up to Dustin, but maybe we could all go out to dinner, the six of us, and then we can drop you three off?" Lucas asked.

"Me too?" El asked, surprised.

"Well yeah. I mean, you're our friend now. You don't have to if you don't want to, since you work early on Fridays." Max said, looking at her.

"No, no, I just didn't expect it." She chuckled. "I'd love to go."

"Awesome! When we're done eating I'll text Mike and let him know."

"Why not Dustin?" El asked.

"Because he usually doesn't respond to texts unless they're in the group chat. No one knows why." Will told her. She snorted.

When they finished the two boxes of pizza, they watched a random movie on Lifetime until about 9 o'clock, when El decided she was gonna go facetime her dad.

"I'm gonna go facetime dad and get ready for bed. Thank you guys again for letting me move in." El told them, smiling at them as she stood up from the couch.

"Hop can facetime?" Will asked, surprised. El snorted and nodded.

"We like having you here already girl, it's awesome." Max said and Lucas nodded in agreement. El blushed a light pink and smiled at them.

"Goodnight guys." She called as she walked up the stairs. She heard

them say goodnight as she walked into her room. She flopped on her bed, pulling her phone out of her pocket and calling her dad. His grinning face appeared on the screen.

"Hey! I did it right this time!" She laughed, turning her lamp on.

"Yeah you did! Guess what?"

"What?"

"I live with Will now." Hopper raised an eyebrow.

"Do you now? Since when did that happen?"

"Since about four o'clock this afternoon." She replied. "I was out looking for apartments and he texted me and told me that they had a room, or well, more like a bed, available. I came and talked to one of his friends after he gave me the address. Her name's Max and she *interviewed* me and an hour later I was practically moved in."

"Well that's awesome! But isn't the house full of boys?"

"Eh, yeah." She said sheepishly. "I'm kinda sharing a room with one of them? But don't worry, they told me he's a good guy and I don't have to worry about him doing anything."

"Huh, you'll tell me if he does something though, right?"

"Of course, dad. I haven't met him officially yet, he's in Hawkins with Dustin."

"Dustin Henderson?"

"I think that's his last name, yeah."

"Is he your roommate?"

"No, his name's Mike Wheeler."

"Huh, well, I know for a fact he won't bother you. Just tell him I'm your dad and he'll be terrified." El snorted.

"You know them?"

"Oh yeah, I know Lucas and Max too. Through Will, of course, and Steve, actually, but I think Mike is scared of me. I give him good reason too, though."

"What'd you do?"

"I yelled at him when he was thirteen." He replied. "I thought he was one of the kids out vandalizing shit but it wasn't him. Almost peed his pants."

"Dad!" She laughed. "You're just a big meanie."

"Hey, I'm chief of police. I gotta put the fear in those boys while they're young." She snorted.

"Sure you do, you big ass teddy bear. Well, I just wanted to call and let you know I'm safe and finally free of screaming children. I'm gonna head to bed, I've had a busy day today." He chuckled.

"Alright, I'll talk to you tomorrow. I love you."

"I love you too, dad." She gave him one last smile and hung up, tossing her phone on the bed. She washed her makeup off, and then took a shower. She towel dried her curly hair as much as she could and brushed her teeth. She pulled back the covers and literally fell face first into the bed. She grabbed her phone to plug it into the charger and noticed she had a text.

*Who the fu-Oh, it's Mike.*

She chuckled at the text and saved his number.

(9:58 PM) Mike- Hey, I snagged ur number out the gc. Just wanted to let you know there's a fan in my closet cus our room is known for getting hot af at night.

(10:12) El- Haha okay awesome, ty! It's all good right now but ty for letting me know.

(10:13) Mike- It's np, we are roommates after all :)

(10:13) El- XD

(10:13) El- so did Dustin succeed in protecting you from ur sister?

(10:15) Mike- Ehh for the most part, yeah. She didn't get to put makeup on me thank god

(10:15) Mike- idk what's up with her i think nancy, my older sister if u didn't know, has been showing her makeup vids or something on youtube

(10:16) El- lmao it's cute tho. i've met her before, actually. Will and Jonathan are my (soon-to-be) step-brothers and Jon's her bff. Plus ik her bf lmao

(10:17) Mike- your dad is the chief?!

(10:20) El- Yep! I talked to him earlier about u earlier actually

(10:20) Mike- oh shit

(10:22) Mike- he's not gonna like, murder me for being ur roommate is he?

(10:22) El- lmao no. He knows you wouldn't do anything you shouldn't do

(10:23) Mike- good cus i honestly wouldn't

(10:23) El- I know :) he also told me he almost made you pee ur pants when you were 13

(10:25) Mike- shit

(10:26) Mike- i didn't pee myself, for one, and two, have you SEEN ur dad. we're like the same height but he's three times bigger than me. I'm like a giant noodle or something.

(10:26) El- Lmao ik he's huge. when he adopted me i was like holy fuck

(10:27) El- also i hope you know i'm gonna call you Noodle now.

(10:28) Mike- tbh i walked into that

(10:28) Mike- oh ur adopted?

(10:31) El- yeah, when i was 12

*(El changed Mike to Noodle)*

(10:33) Noodle- LMAO XD

(10:33) Noodle- i didn't know that. well someone prob told me but as you saw in the gc i don't pay much attention sometimes

(10:34) El- lmao same tho

(10:34) El- wait how tall are you?

(10:36) Noodle- 6'3

(10:39) El- well shit ur legit a foot taller than me. i'm 5'3 D:

(10:41) Noodle- lmao ur short then!

(10:41) El- -\_- -\_-

(10:41) El- ur right tho

(10:42) El- when y'all coming back?

(10:45) Noodle- Dustin wants to come back tomorrow but we got shit to do in the morning and afternoon but we're gonna drive back that night. prob around like 12 or 1 am depending

(10:46) El- oh okay, i'll be asleep then lmao. I'll have an alarm set for 5, do you think it would bother u?

(10:47) Noodle- nah i'm a heavy sleeper. WW3 could happen right outside the door and i wouldn't wake up

(10:47) Noodle- wait why tf you getting up so early?

(10:49) El- I have work at 6 lmao. so i get up at 5 to get ready

(10:51) Noodle- oh okay. what days do you work?

(10:51) El- Mon, Wed, & Fri 6-3 and on Sat 11-7

(10:51) El- i work at Benny's

(10:53) Noodle- oh okay damn that's early. u know i think i've seen u before even tho idk what u look like

(10:53) Noodle- i used to get coffee before class

(10:54) El- you prob have. i can send a pic if you want

(10:55) Noodle- i mean u don't have to lmao. it's up to u

(10:56) El- lmao ok hang on

(10:56) El- (selfie of El in her uniform, hair pulled up in a bun)

(10:57) Noodle- yep definitely seen you

(10:57) Noodle- you cussed troy out one day.

(10:59) El- LMAO I hate him so fucking much

(11:01) Noodle- Same

(11:02) Noodle- ur really pretty btw

(11:04) El- awe thank you! 3 ur sweeter than i thought you were lmao

(11:07) Noodle- :D

(11:08) El- this bed is so freaking comfy i stg

(11:08) El- so much better than my old one

(11:13) Noodle- good lmao

(11:17) El- okay well i'ma go to sleep since i been up since 5 lmao. Goodnight, Mike :)

(11:18) Noodle- Goodnight! I hope you sleep good.

(11:18) El- Ty, you too :)

With a blush and a smile on her face, she drifted off to sleep, thinking about Mike.

*Why the fuck am I thinking about him, I haven't even met him yet?*

---

## Hawkins, Indiana

"Dustin, I am royally fucked." Mike said, falling face down into his bed next to Dustin. Dustin lifted his head up a bit to look at him.

"Why?" He asked. "And who the hell have you been over there texting and cheesing at?"

"Do you remember the girl that I had, well, *have* a crush on that works at Benny's? Remember when I told you about her?"

"Yeah, you'd never tell me which girl she was."

"Well, I know who she is for sure now."

"Who?" He asked, confused.

"El." He wouldn't look at Dustin, but he could feel his eyes burning a hole in the side of his head.

"Dude, seriously?" He asked, surprised. Mike hummed in response.  
"How do you know?"

"I texted her to tell her about the fan in my closet and we kept texting. She just went to bed." He added. "She told me about working at Benny's and I told her I probably knew her, and she sent me a picture and Jesus Christ man how is there a woman on this earth as pretty as her." He groaned into his pillow. Dustin giggled, yes, *giggled*, at him. "It's not funny, Dustin!"

"It kinda is, man. You're acting like you're back in middle school crushing on girls you know you won't have a chance with."

"Because I don't? Jeez, dude, her dad is the *Chief*, and I'm way outta her league. She wouldn't go for some nerdy guy like me. I've had a crush on her for the last two fucking years and I've never talked to her, not until tonight."

"Okay, first off, the Chief is cool, and second, yeah you're nerdy but I mean, so's me, Lucas, and Will, and Lucas has a cool ass girlfriend."

"She's a nerd too."

"Not the point. You're a nerdy music guy, and girls *love* nerdy music guys."

"How come you haven't got a girlfriend then?"

"Let me say this *again*, not the point, Michael." Mike glared at him.  
"And you're a nice guy, and that's pretty rare nowadays, so I think

you have a pretty nice shot. At least actually get to know her before you try anything."

"I'm *never* trying anything, you idiot."

"So you're just gonna die alone?"

"Wha-? Dustin, shut the hell up, no I'm not gonna die alone. "*I hope.*  
"It's just a crush, it'll pass eventually."

"I'm sure it will."

"Ugh, whatever. Go get on the couch." He pushed him off the bed and Dustin laughed. He got up off the floor, snatching his pillow off the bed and walking towards the door.

"Goodnight, lover boy." He narrowly missed Mike's shoe, laughing as he walked down the hall.

## 4. Chapter 4

Thursday, September 7, 2017

El woke up at around ten o'clock the next morning. She rolled onto her back and stretched, letting out a low groan. It's the best night she's slept in weeks. Having two toddlers wake up screaming in the middle of night definitely didn't help her sleeping schedule. She turned on her side and unplugged her phone, checking for messages. There were just a few Instagram notifications and Will on Snapchat, and some texts from him, text-screaming at her to wake up so they'd keep their one hundred and ninety-two day streak going. She rolled her eyes and took a selfie, flipping him off, and sending it to him. She got up, leaving her phone on the table, and went and relieved herself. She washed her hands and then brushed her teeth, pulling her hair back up into a bun. She put a T-shirt on over her tank top, grabbed her phone, and went downstairs, where Lucas and Will were in the kitchen.

"Good morning." She told Lucas.

"Morning." He smiled at her.

"What about me?" Will asked. She scowled at him.

"Buenos días hijo de puta madre." He glared at her this time.

"What did you say?" Lucas asked, confused.

"Good morning mother fucker." She replied casually. Lucas laughed.  
"Where's Max?"

"Showering." He replied. "We're gonna go out for a late breakfast if you want to join."

"Sure! I'm gonna go get ready then." She said. She bumped her hip with Will and then went back upstairs. She dug through her closet and found a loose, pink-ish, purple short sleeved shirt and jean shorts that stopped right above her knees. She dug through the box of shoes until she found her black sandals and tossed them towards the door.

Leaving her hair up, she did her makeup pretty quickly, just powder, a bit of blush, a nude eye shadow and mascara. She made her bed up and grabbed her purse and phone, put her shoes on, and hopped back down the steps. She went back in the kitchen and sat at the island beside Will.

"Huh, that was quick." He nudged her. She shrugged.

"I've gotten a lot better at getting ready faster."

"Obviously, she used to take like, an hour and a half to get ready for school. We were late almost always."

"So that explains it, huh?" Max asked, walking into the kitchen. Her hair was up in a bun too, albeit messier than El's, and she had a makeup free face, wearing black leggings and a blue T-shirt with flip-flops. El glared at Will and he laughed. "Hey, don't worry, we always make Lucas take a shower last because he takes two to three hour long ones." El raised an eyebrow.

"Really?" She asked. He shrugged.

"I like showers, don't judge me." She chuckled.

"Don't you look pretty, eh?" Max told her, looking her up and down. El shrugged, smiling when she remembered her conversation with Mike last night.

"So, Mike told me I was pretty last night." Will choked on his water and Lucas smacked him on the back a couple times, laughing.

"When did you talk to Mike?" He asked.

"He texted me while I was in the shower to let me know about the fan in his closet." She shrugged. "And we got to texting, ended up texting for an hour."

"But why did he call you pretty? I'm pretty sure he's never seen you."

"I told him about how I work at Benny's and he said he's pretty sure he'd seen me there, but didn't know what I looked like, so I sent him a picture. He remembered the day I cussed Troy out. Then said I was

pretty." She shrugged again, like it was no big deal.

"Girl." Max deadpanned.

"What?"

"Do you have any idea how rare it is for Mike to compliment a girl other than his sisters or mom, and even that's rare?"

"Uh, no? I literally only talked to him for like an hour."

"It is rare." Lucas agreed. "He never really shows any interest in anyone, like at all."

"He only goes on dates because I set him up with someone." Max added.

"And they never work out, but usually it's because she has bad taste in women." Will pointed a thumb out at her. She snorted.

"You know, now that I think about it, I *have* seen him before, at Benny's, but I've never talked to him. I always thought he was cute. I've never been *up close* so I was surprised when he told me how tall he was." Max snorted at that.

"I'll say it again, fucking giraffe." Will said.

"No, he's a giant noodle." El corrected. "He called himself that, so I will be calling him Noodle from now on."

"Dude!" Lucas burst out laughing. She grinned. "Jeez, I like you. Not like that!" He corrected quickly, before Max or Will could say anything. The two laughed. "You're funny as hell." He said, chuckling.

"Eh, I try." She shrugged. "That's a total lie, I'm awkward as hell if you haven't noticed already. Plus I say what's on my mind without thinking sometimes, so y'all will probably hear me say some weird shit."

"It's true." Will said. "She called her self a potato out loud one time, then later that night, at like, three in the morning, *I am the frenchiest french fry.*" Will mocked her, and Lucas and Max burst out laughing.

"What the hell, El!" Max laughed.

"Hey, that rhymed!" The four continued laughing for a few minutes, saying random things and causing it to start up again, before finally leaving to go to breakfast, which, by now was basically lunch. They decided on the Waffle House, which El was very happy about. They drove Will's car, and she sat in the passenger seat. They were just listening to music when Lucas' phone rang.

"Oh God, it's Dustin." Will snorted and turned the radio all the way down as Lucas answered.

"What's up, man?" He put it on speaker.

*"Uh, nothing much really dude. I've been staying at Mike's 'cause my mom and all her damn cats, you know?"* Lucas snorted.

"Oh yeah, I know. How many is it now?" Max asked.

*"Mike, how many cats does my mom have?" Dustin asked.*

*"I don't fucking know, it's your mom!" Mike, who had a shockingly deep voice, said.* El raised an eyebrow at that, but giggled at his response.

*"Hey, do you have it on speaker too?"*

"Hell yeah, I do. We're on the way to Waffle House for lunch."

*"Oh, who all is it?"*

"The four of us." Will called.

*"Hey Will!" Mike yelled.*

*"Four? Wha-Oh, right. Hey El!" Dustin yelled this time.* El laughed.

"Hey, you two!" She called back.

*"Oh wow, you have a nice voice." Dustin chirped.*

*"What in the fuck?" Mike mumbled. "You weird ass."*

*"Says you, Mr. I'm gonna cut some cartwheels with my lanky ass body*

*and probably cut my chin open again." Dustin sassed.*

*"That was a particularly long last name." Mike retorted. "And I've gotten better at them. I was like, ten when that happened."*

"Oh yeah, I remember that. That was funny as hell." Will said.

*"Who asked you, Mr. bowl cut?"*

*"Ooh, sassy today, are we, Noodle?" Max teased, and winked at El. It was silent for a couple seconds, and Dustin burst out laughing.*

*"You guys should see how red faced he is right now. Shit, lemme see your phone." There were a couple weird sounds from the other end, Dustin laughing as he took a picture.*

"You know he could delete it, right?" Lucas asked.

*"Well, duh. I sent it to my phone so I'll send it in the group chat later."* The four in the car laughed.

*"Yes, I'm a giant noodle and I'm not afraid to admit it."*

"Yep! How ya doin', Noodle?" El joked. Mike snorted.

*"Good until you exposed me." She shrieked with laughter at that and everyone else couldn't help but laugh with her, at the comment, and her laugh.*

"Ahh, I'm sorry, Noodle, I won't expose you anymore." He laughed again. *Wow, I really like his laugh. Wait, what?*

"Okay well, we'll see you guys what, in the morning?" Lucas asked, unbuckling his seat belt.

*"Yeah, unless you're up until like twelve or one." Mike replied.*

"Oh, well I'll be up so I'll see you two then." Max called, getting out of the car after El.

"We're going in, we'll talk to you guys later, alright?" Lucas said.

*"Byeee!" They yelled into the phone.* Lucas laughed and hung up,

shaking his head.

He and Max held hands as they walked in, sitting at the table Will and El chose.

"So, anyone know what they're gonna get?"

"Waffles." El replied immediately. Will snorted.

"She *loves* waffles. Especially eggos."

"Eggos are my one and only love." She said seriously. The other two laughed. Their phones all dinged at the same time and grinned, knowing it was Dustin.

### **The Par-tayy**

(11:47 AM) Dusty- Who knew Mike's face could get this red?

(11:47) Dusty- (pic of Mike making grabby hands at his phone, squinting from the sunlight, face red as fire)

(11:48) Zoomer- Awe! Guys, look at him! All red faced and embarrassed.

(11:48) Magic Mike- kjdcklsadjbelkacblkdcb

(11:49) Willy Will- That was an ugly keyboard smash, Noodle.

(11:49) Magic Mike- Will i hate u

A waitress walked up to them, the four giggling, and managed to order their food before going back to the group chat.

(11:56) Stalker- lmfao mike why was ur face so red anyways?

(11:56) Magic Mike- idk man

(11:57) Dusty- I knowwww ;)

(11:57) Dusty- hey did you guys know mike is abusive

(11:59) Eleven- what did you do to make him abusive?

(12:01 PM) Zoomer- LMAO EL

(12:01) Dusty- I'll have you know I did nothing wrong.

(12:02) Magic Mike- ok

(12:02) Dusty- 1, he just punched me in the arm, which, considering he has Noodle arms, actually hurt

(12:03) Dusty- 2, he pushed me off his bead last night

(12:03) Dusty- bed\* wtf bead

(12:04) Stalker- dude we all know the only time mike ever hits anyone is because they've pissed him off, meaning you pissed him off or something. Even El knows this and she's never been around you two.

(12:06) Dusty- you know what u right u right

(12:06) Dusty- Mike's still abusive tho like who pushes someone off a bed?

(12:09) Eleven- whatever the reason, u prob deserved it XD

(12:09) Dusty- man y'all got el against me already DX

(12:11) Eleven- lmao nah i like you guys, you guys are cool.

(12:13) Magic Mike- to the guy who ISN'T driving back to Chicago at 11 o'clock at night better stfu or i'm leaving your ass

(12:13) Magic Mike- ily man but jesus

(12:15) Zoomer- LMAO you guys r funny

(12:16) Willy Will- hey while we're waiting on our food do you guys wanna see a pic of El basically mentally abusing me this morning?

(12:16) Magic Mike- ?

(12:17) Eleven- WILLIAM BYERS DON'T YOU DARE

(12:18) Willy Will- (pic of El flipping him off this morning)

(12:18) Willy Will- ah, the joys of trying to keep a streak going

(12:20) Eleven- I didn't even know you screenshot that! You ass lmao

(12:22) Eleven- u know what i still look cute even though i legit just

woke up

(Mike & El)

(12:24) Noodle- hey did you sleep alright last night?

(12:24) El- oh yeah! definitely! for the last couple weeks i've had to deal with screaming toddlers at night

(12:24) El- really fucked up my sleeping schedule

(12:26) Noodle- well that's good, and i bet. kids suck sometimes.

(12:26) El- fr lmao

(12:28) El- so wyd anyway?

(12:31) Noodle- me and dustin had a late breakfast and we're at the store grocery shopping for my mom. Then we're gonna cut my parents grass, front and back, and same for his mom.

(12:31) El- EW (to both)

(12:32) Noodle- ikr i hate grocery shopping

(12:32) Noodle- or any shopping in general

(12:33) Noodle- and my dad's too lazy to do anything so

(12:34) El- Sameee. I only like shopping for makeup but that's still rare lmao

(12:35) Noodle- lmao definite ew there

(12:35) Noodle- you don't need makeup

(12:27) Noodle- ur pretty without it :)

(12:27) El- Awe, ty! :) ur so sweet idk how they say you're abusive

(12:28) Noodle- No need to thank me, it's true. And I'm not, it's incredibly rare for me to get pissed off enough to hit someone. I love dustin but lord he's been getting on my nerves the last couple days

(12:29) Noodle- he's basically moved in at my parents house, on the couch, because his mom has like ten cats to take his place.

(12:32) El- omg lmao that'd be me but w dogs

(12:32) El- and ik the feeling i get abusive towards Will when he's

being annoying

(12:33) El- Which is, quite frankly, all the fucking time.

(12:34) Noodle- LMAO I've never actually hit will willingly but he does annoy me too

(12:35) Noodle- we shared a room freshman year and he snores SO loud I couldn't handle it.

(12:35) El- i thought you could sleep through WW3?

(12:36) Noodle- No I can, it's just he always fell asleep before me and I couldn't fall asleep listening to my own personal lawnmower in the other bed

(12:37) El- oh lmao yeah he is loud af

(12:37) El- OMG my waffles are here ttyl!

## 5. Chapter 5

"Enjoying your waffles over there, El?" Lucas asked. El had been dancing a little in her seat as she ate. She looked at him and grinned, nodding.

"Uh huh! That's not the only reason though." She let out a little giggle and Will looked at her weird.

"What the hell was that?" He asked. She shrugged.

"Did you guys know how sweet Mike is?" She asked, taking a sip of her water. Will choked, *again*, so Lucas smacked his back, *again*.

"El!" He exclaimed. "What the hell? You two have never even met face to face." She snorted.

"Did he compliment you again?" Max asked, wiggling her eyebrows.

"Uh huh. Told me I was pretty without makeup."

"He's in love." Lucas joked. El's cheeks turned a bit pink, but replied,

"I highly doubt that." She shook her head.

"Why?" Max asked, eyebrow raised. El shrugged.

"I'm just unlucky in love, ask Will, all my high school boyfriends failed miserably. And the few I've had since being in college? Jeez."

"They kinda did, but hey, I personally think you and Mike would make a good match. I totally ship it." El snorted, covering her mouth as she chewed. She shook her head, chuckling, and stood up.

"I'll be right back." She told them, heading to the bathroom.

"Guys." Lucas said seriously, causing the two to look at them. "I think Mike is actually a little in love with her. Not literally, but..."

"What?" Will asked, confused.

"Dustin texted me last night and told me something Mike said. Do you remember when Max forced Mike into telling us who his crush was a year or so ago?"

"That was like two years ago." Max said, defensively.

"Not the point, anyways, he didn't know her name and he's never actually talked to her, right?" The two shrugged. "He wouldn't tell us where he'd been seeing her, and now I know."

"Spill!"

"Mike told Dustin she worked at Benny's." He said, looking at them. "And that he finally knew what her name was, because El sent him a picture last night."

"Holy shit, Mike has a crush on El!" Max almost yelled. Will shushed her quickly when an old couple looked at them.

"For *two* years?" Will asked, surprised. Lucas shrugged.

"I don't know man, but that explains why a lot of those blind dates didn't work out."

"Well," Max sat back, wiping her mouth with a napkin, "It's a good thing they're roommates, huh?" She wiggled her eyebrows again. "I'm so gonna set them up."

"Set who up?" El asked, sitting back down next to Will.

"You and Mike." Max replied, casually. El's eyes nearly bugged out of her head.

"Huh?"

"Yeah." Max shrugged and Lucas coughed, trying to hide back his laughter. El eyed him for a second, then turned back to Will.

"What? I ship it."

"What happened to all those blind dates you set him up on? Didn't they all not work out?"

"Yeah, but now we know why."

"Is he gay?" She actually sounded a bit sad. The three burst out laughing.

"El, I just said I'm gonna set you up with him. I'd set him up with a guy if he was gay, which he *isn't*." She blushed.

"Sorry, I had a brain fart."

"She's just in the honeymoon phase still." Lucas said. She gasped dramatically, throwing a balled up napkin at him.

"You're one to talk, Lucas! You and Max have been in that phase for the last five years!"

"We've only been together for two though?" Max looked at Will confused.

"My point exactly. You've been all lovey and gross for the last five years." She rolled his eyes and kicked him under the table. "It's true, El, when you meet Mike and Dustin tomorrow, ask them about *Lumax* and they will go into a *very* detailed interpretation of them when we were in high school."

"*Lumax?*" She asked, eyebrows raised. "Why not... *Mucas*?" Max and Lucas looked at her, and Will burst out laughing.

"Yeah, you and Mike are definitely gonna get together, one way or another." Max sighed, looking at Lucas, who just looked utterly defeated.

"Why?"

"Because that's what he called them." Will explained. "He still does, actually. We were joking one day after they got together, talking about possible ship names, and that was the first thing that popped into the poor guys head. We were also a little drunk, mind you, and he was like, "Will deepened his voice in an attempt to mock Mike's, "*Delicious Mucas making out*." El stared at him before making a face, and then laughing.

"Oh wow, this is amazing." She said, grabbing her cup and drinking some water. "You guys are literally the highlight of my year." She said, seriously. They raised their eyebrows.

"Why's that?" Lucas asked.

"Well, for one, you guys are letting me *live* with you. Two, you guys are hilarious and so welcoming. I've never met anyone in a day and became friends with them so quickly, not to mention *live* with them, but, you know." She shrugged.

"Awe!" Max stood from her chair and hugged El, causing her and the two guys to laugh. "You're the highlight of my year, too." She said, sitting back down. El chuckled.

"Why aren't you ever this affectionate with us?" Will asked. Max looked at him and rolled her eyes.

"One, me and her are gonna be best friends, and two, the only person I really have a soft spot for, other than Lucas, *occasionally*, is Mike."

"Oh, true."

"She and Mike hated each other at one point." Lucas said. "Still not sure why, but they did, and now they're joined at the hip when we're all together."

"Not true!" Max wiggled a finger in front of his face. "Yeah, we're best friends, but we are *not* joined at the hip. That's him and Dustin."

"Yeah, but that's just because Dustin's grateful for Mike because he lets him stay at his house during breaks." Will looked at El, who giggled at the small argument going on across from them.

"They always argue like that." He told her. "Usually about who's best friends with who, so you'll be hearing this pretty often." El smiled.

"I don't mind a bit."

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**Hawkins**

**5 PM**

"I'm literally so tired." Dustin said, falling on Mike's floor as soon as he walked into the room. Mike, not expecting it, tripped and fell on top of Dustin.

"Idiots!" Holly yelled, laughing at them as she walked past. Mike just flipped her off and got up with a groan.

"I did more work than you did, asshat, how are you tired?" He said, plopping down on his bed.

"You know being in the sun makes me tired." Dustin replied. Mike scoffed.

"You're just a big ass baby. A lazy one, at that." Dustin flipped him off.

"I'm gonna take a nap here." Dustin told him, rolling onto his back and putting his hat over his face. "Goodnight." Mike sighed and pulled out his phone, scrolling through Instagram and Twitter until he heard a snore. He looked at Dustin and rolled his eyes. He pulled up his camera and took a couple second video of him snoring, and said at the end,

"This motherfucker is actually asleep on my floor." He sent it to the group chat, and almost immediately they replied.

### **The Par-tayy**

(5:23) Magic Mike- can ya'll believe this fool?

(5:23) Magic Mike- (video)

(5:24) Stalker- that doesn't surprise me a bit.

(5:24) Zoomer- MIKEY BOY WHEN ARE YOU GUYS LEAVING?

(5:25) Magic Mike- mom is making us dinner and we're gonna watch a movie, then head out around 10:30

(5:25) Willy Will- why are you guys watching a movie after? Why don't you just leave right after dinner?

(5:27) Magic Mike- we're actually going to see some random movie

with Holly. idk what it is i forgot

(5:27) Willy Will- Ohh makes sense

(5:29) Eleven- are you guys gonna go see IT when it comes out?

(5:30) Magic Mike- I want to see it sometime next week but idk

(5:31) Magic Mike- i sure as hell ain't going alone

(5:31) Stalker- oh yeah lmao, El, Mike's afraid of clowns.

(5:31) Magic Mike- I am not ashamed

(5:31) Magic Mike- have you SEEN the damn trailer?

(5:32) Eleven- I have to admit, it does seem pretty creepy but I want to see it. I loved the miniseries and the book

(5:33) Magic Mike- Same! I feel like the miniseries was a bit rushed though

(5:34) Eleven- I mean it kinda was. it's a big book. i think they should've like split it up into two movies, like one when they're kids, and another older

(5:37) Magic Mike- exactly. it was still good though, either way

(5:39) Magic Mike- anyways i gtg food's ready and i gotta wake this idiot up. talk to y'all later

(5:40) Zoomer- byeeee Mikey

(5:41) Willy Will- ^

(5:41) Stalker- ^^

(5:44) Eleven- Bye Noodle!

"El!" Max laughed, reading the text. "Jesus, I fucking love that name, man." She said, and El laughed along with her.

"Hey, he technically came up with it himself, I'm just going along with it." She shrugged. Max snorted.

"I know it's a little late, almost being six, but do you wanna go to the

mall with me?" Max asked her. El shrugged.

"Sure, I need some more foundation." She said, grinning. Max nodded.

"Okay, I'm gonna go let them know and we'll leave." She told her. El nodded and went up to her room to get her shoes.

## **6. Chapter 6**

**Thank you guys for reviewing so far! It makes my day! Sorry I just all of a sudden started posting this without any A/N's or anything, I'll probably start doing that every once in a while! I'm gonna start replying to reviews as well :)**

**Sorry this is kinda late, I've been busy the last couple days but I plan to update at least every two or three days. After this chapter I'll have 15 pre-written chapters!**

**Thank you for reading and I hope you guys continue to like it!**

---

**Hawkins  
10 PM**

"Mike-" Dustin started, but Mike interrupted him.

"We're *not* talking about this, Dustin." Mike said, keeping his eyes on the road.

"But-

"*Dustin.*" He shut up after that and sighed, turning to his phone to keep him entertained.

He witnessed probably the biggest fight the Wheeler's have ever had tonight. Everything was going fine until Karen had asked Holly what moving the three were going to see, and Ted butted in, telling her she wasn't going because it was a school night. That resulted in Holly yelling at him and then going to her room, while Ted turned his attention to Mike and started yelling at him for trying to make her like him. He was drunk, and nothing he said really made sense, but Mike blew up at him and decided he wasn't going to live there anymore, *ever*, despite Karen's desperate pleas. That wasn't even the worst bit, but just thinking about it made Dustin want to cry. Dustin had helped Mike pack up almost everything he owned that he'd left there while at college, and pilled everything in the back of Mike's truck.

Now, they're on the two hour drive back to Chicago, the only sound being the music playing from the radio.

"Do you-"

"No, I don't want to talk about it, Dustin." He said harshly, glaring at him out the corner of his eye.

"I was just gonna ask if you wanted some gum." He replied, sounding almost childish. Mike sighed and ran a hand through his hair.

"I'm sorry, man. No, thanks. I just... that was the worst fight we've ever had." He shifted a little in the seat and continued. "I hate that it happened in front of you and Holly."

"Don't worry about that, dude, I was *about* to call him out on his shit, but I didn't wanna get kicked out again. It's not your fault anyways, everything he said was bullshit and you know it." Mike just shrugged. Dustin played around a little with the radio for a while after that, as well as playing a couple games on his phone. Mike scared him when he all of a sudden said,

"Happy birthday." Dustin looked at the time on his phone and noticed it was 12 AM. Immediately after Mike told him happy birthday, the rest of the party did too. Mike always made sure to tell him happy birthday first, and Dustin absolutely loved the fact.

"Thanks, buddy." Dustin grinned at him. "I'm legal now, whooo!" he yelled quietly, causing Mike to laugh.

*Well, at least he's feeling better, even if it's just a little.*

"I know I can't do much to make you feel better, but why don't we just blast the radio and sing along like idiots like we used to do?" Dustin suggested. Mike gave him a smile and nodded, turning the volume up. They looked at each other, grinning, when they realized what song it was.

"IT'S GONNA TAKE A LOT TO TAKE ME AWAY FROM YOU!" They screamed at the top of their lungs. "THERE'S NOTHING THAT A HUNDRED MEN OR MORE COULD EVER DO."

"I BLESS THE RAINS DOWN IN AFRICA!" Dustin screamed, his voice cracking with *every* word, causing Mike to laugh so hard he had to pull off on the side of the road.

"Jesus Christ." Mike said, chuckling, a hand on his stomach. "I needed that, man, thank you."

"Hey, don't thank me, thank my voice, which is still going through puberty." He replied, voice cracking with the last word. Mike snorted, but started on the road again.

"On the road again!" Dustin sang and, without looking at Mike, could tell he was being glared at.

"Don't even start singing that."

---

## **Chicago**

**1:30 AM**

"Can you do me a favor and not tell anyone what happened tonight?" Mike asked Dustin as he pulled into the garage, hardly registering the silver Chevy Cruise he parked next to. "Ooh, nice." He added upon seeing it. Dustin snorted.

"Nah, I won't say anything. *You*, should, though. You know Max is gonna suspect something, especially if she see's us drag everything up to your room." He told him.

"Which I definitely don't feel like doing. I'll deal with it tomorrow, or later if you wanna be technical." Dustin chuckled and nodded, grabbing their duffel bags out of the back seat and giving Mike's to him.

"Thank ya much." Mike mumbled, getting out of the truck and shutting the door. He walked up the steps, Dustin following, and smacked the button on the wall and unlocked the door as the garage door shut. He was almost knocked off his feet when he opened the door, the fiery redhead just *waiting* to attack him.

"Mike!" She screeched, latching onto him like a koala.

"Shh! El and Will are asleep!" Lucas shushed her, moving past them to hug Dustin and wish him a happy birthday.

"I missed you too, Max, but can you get off? I'm sore as fuck." He told her, still hugging her back. She dropped down and gave him a proper hug, and then did the same as Lucas, hugging Dustin while Lucas hugged Mike.

"Why are you sore? Are you okay?" She asked, snatching his bag off the floor and walking into the kitchen, setting it on the counter. He nodded.

"I'm gonna head up to bed, g'night guys." Dustin said, waving at him. They all told him good night and turned back to their conversation.

"We did a lot of shit today, well, I did *most* of it, because Dustin's a lazy fucker." Lucas snickered. "Went grocery shopping for my mom, then cut the grass and shit at his house, and then at mine because my dad is a lazy ass drunk who doesn't do anything. Which you guys already know." He plopped down in a chair at the island and leaned his forehead on the counter top. Max looked at Lucas, and eyebrow raised. She squeezed his shoulder and sat next to him.

"Did something happen?" She asked.

"Just the usual." He sighed. "Mom made the usual dinner before I leave, and me and Dustin were gonna go see that movie with Holly but dad yelled at her and started talking shit to me for wanting to keep her out late."

"The hell? You guys would have been back by her bedtime anyways." Lucas said, making a face.

"I know. And I feel bad that we didn't get to take her, because I promised, but..." He groaned and smacked his head on the counter a couple times. He definitely wasn't gonna tell them about him moving out yet, that's for sure. He sighed and sat up. "I'm gonna go to bed, I'm tired." He told them. They nodded.

"Okay, if you need us you know where to find us." Max told him. "And try to be quiet, El's asleep." He nodded.

"Goodnight guys." He walked up the stairs, bag over his shoulder. As quietly as he could, he opened the door. Everything was the same, other than the fact that his crush was asleep in the bed next to his. She was laying on her stomach, arms under her pillow, and the right side of her face squished against it. He noticed the fan in between their beds and grinned. He put his bag on the floor next to his bed and went to the bathroom to get ready for bed without disturbing her. But of course, the second he started to walk towards his bed, he tripped and knocked over a couple books from his desk, resulting in a loud crash.

"Fuck." He mumbled, hoping it hadn't woken her up. He leaned down to pick them up when he heard rustling, and figured she was just moving around to get comfortable, but then the lamp came on.

*Goddammit*

"You okay?" She mumbled, sitting up and rubbing her eyes before looking at him sleepily.

"Shit, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to wake you, go back to sleep. Go, go!" He shooed gently.

"But are you okay?" She repeated.

"Yeah, I'm fine." He gave her a small smile. "Go back to sleep." He told her. She nodded and turned off her lamp, which was the exact same one as his. She laid back down, getting comfortable. He let out a breath and put the books on his desk and quickly, yet *carefully*, took off his shirt and tossed it on his bag before getting in bed and pulling the covers over him. He moved around a bit, before sighing and enjoying the cool sheets.

"It's nice to meet you." He heard El mutter softly. He chuckled, a blush creeping up his neck.

"It's nice to meet you too, finally." He could almost hear the smile in her voice when she said,

"Nighty night, Mike." He grinned so wide his cheeks hurt.

"G'night, El."

---

## 5 AM

El certainly didn't expect to be woken up at two in the morning, especially by the cutest guy she'd ever seen. Yeah, after being a bit of a stalker, like Lucas, by stalking his Instagram, she decided he was the cutest guy ever. And the hottest. And the prettiest. *And the sweetest.*

She let out her usual groan, smacking at her phone until it shut off. She heard a soft snore from across the room and her eyes widened. She'd *almost* forgotten about the incident last night, and she was glad she didn't. She was also glad her alarm didn't wake him up. She smiled to herself, unplugging her phone and taking it in the bathroom with her. She changed into her uniform, which was just a white T-shirt and black pants, brushed her teeth, and did her light makeup. She brushed through her hair and put it up in its usual bun. She'd taken a shower last night so she wouldn't have to this morning

She tip-toed back into the room, and took a second to see how he slept, straight up starfish, his legs and arms stretched out to each corner of the bed, his head tilted to the side on his pillow. She noticed that he hadn't plugged his phone in, so she plugged it in for him, seeing his lockscreen. It was him and two girls, one being younger than him, with his arms around the both of them. She figured it was his sisters, and she smiled at the fact. She put her shoes on and picked up her bag, making sure her keys were in it, and headed out of the room, shutting the door gently.

When she got down the stairs, she automatically went in the kitchen and opened the freezer. Lucas had so graciously gotten her a box of eggos while he was shopping the other day, upon request by Max. She popped two of them in the toaster and grabbed a paper plate, and after opening a couple cabinets, found the syrup. She usually didn't put syrup on it, but she felt like it today. After making herself a cup of milk, she got the whipped cream out and put it on top of the eggos, along with the syrup, and sat at the island, enjoying her breakfast. There's a whiteboard on the fridge, so she grabbed the marker connected to it and wrote a note, saying,

*Good morning (or afternoon, depending on who's getting up), I'm off to*

*work and I'll be back around 3:30 or so. Have a nice day guys! xoxo, El 3*

*P.S. Happy birthday Dustin! :D*

She smiled, happy with her note, and cleaned up her mess before locking the door of the garage, having gotten a key yesterday afternoon at the mall, and got in her car, but not without noticing Mike's truck and everything in the back.

*Huh, I wonder what that's about.*

She shrugged and hit the button on her key chain, and the door opened. She backed out into the road before closing it again, and was off to work.

---

Dustin was, shockingly, the first to wake up later that morning, at around 10 o'clock, and when he saw El's note, he grinned and ran upstairs, barging into Mike's room and jumping on him, who woke with a start, smacking Dustin as hard as he could.

"Hey! What was that for? It's my birthday!" He whined.

"Yeah, yeah, whatever. What is it?" He grumbled, pulling the blanket up to his chest.

"Oh!" He remembered what he was gonna say. "I love your girlfriend so much." Mike stared at him for a second, before punching him in the arm again.

"Fuck off, Henderson. She's not my girlfriend."

"Not yet." Dustin wiggled his eyebrows and Mike pushed him off the bed again, which, coincidentally, woke the other three up, and they came wandering into Mike's room, wondering what happened.

"Why the hell are you on the floor?" Will asked, flopping on El's made bed and going to sleep before anyone answered him. Max crawled up next to Mike and snuggled into his other pillow.

"All I did was come in here to confess my undying love for his girlfriend because she left a note telling us all good morning. And she

told me happy birthday. This ass pushed me off the bed again. This is twice in two days!" He exclaimed dramatically.

"Dustin?" Lucas asked.

"Yeah?"

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"I don't know." Mike whined. "But I want all of you out unless you're gonna shut the fuck up."

"Alright, Mr. Grumpypants. I'll remember this." Dustin said, taking Lucas' outstretched hand and allowing him to pull him up.

"I'll remember it too, so when you wake up hungover tomorrow, I'll be sure to annoy the hell out of you." Mike retorted, flipping over so he was on his stomach and burying his face into his pillow. Max snickered and Mike nudged her with his foot. Dustin huffed and started towards the door. "Oh, and Dustin?" Mike called quietly.

"What?"

"Happy birthday." Dustin grinned again.

"Thanks, Buddy. Goodnight." He joked.

"G'night." Mike mumbled back, and fell asleep as soon as Dustin and Lucas left the room.

"I think he left a mark." Dustin said, gesturing to his arm as he and Lucas went downstairs for breakfast. Lucas rolled his eyes.

"I mean, if he did, you kinda deserved it. Imagine if you did that to Max, she'd probably kill you. Mike was too busy being half asleep to attempt it."

"You know what? You're right."

## 7. Chapter 7

4 PM

"Look, dad, I only broke my middle finger, all is well." El said, holding her phone between her ear and shoulder as she attempted to unlock the garage door.

"Only your middle finger? El, Jesus Christ what did he do for you to punch him?" He exclaimed as she finally unlocked it and walked in, shutting it behind her. She heard laughter coming from the kitchen as she entered.

"He grabbed my ass. And he tried to grab my boobs. It was self defense man!" She leaned against the door frame in the hall before going in the kitchen.

"Did he at least get fired?"

"Oh yeah, Benny fired him on the spot, even after I punched him. I'm pressing charges too."

"You'd better. Kid better be glad he's in Chicago because I'd be on his ass right now." She chuckled.

"I know, dad. Alright, let me go, I just got home."

"Alright, don't go around breaking anymore fingers or noses m'kay?"

"I won't. On the bright side, I can flip people off for no reason." Hopper snorted and she giggled. "Okay, I'll call you later. Love you."

"Love you too, ya badass." She snorted and hung up, tucking it in her pocket. The laughter in the kitchen had stopped for the most part, and Will met her in the doorway of the kitchen, arms crossed.

"What happened?" He demanded. She held up her right hand. "Jane Hopper, will you ever go three months without injuring yourself?" She shrugged innocently.

"Probably not. Now you can lecture me after I meet Mike and Dustin,"

m'kay?" She crossed her arms, giving him the same look. He snorted and nodded, stepping out of the way. Immediately, all she saw was a hat and curly hair as she was lifted up in a hug. "Holy shit!" She laughed, hugging him back.

"Hi El! It's nice to see you in person!" He exclaimed, letting her go and waving excitedly. She laughed again.

"You're gonna freak her out man, chill." Lucas said, nudging him.

"It's fine." She waved him off, smiling. "It's nice to meet you too, Dustin. Happy birthday." He grinned and turned to Mike, who'd been standing there awkwardly, a small smile on his face.

"Mike, I'll tell you again, I love your girlfriend." The look on Mike's face was priceless and El burst out laughing with the others as Mike chased Dustin, tackling him in the living room.

"I hate you!" Mike exclaimed, tickling Dustin's sides as he straddled him, Dustin thrashing wildly, laughing so hard he didn't make a sound.

"Ahh stop stop stop! I'm gonna piss myself!" He finally managed. Mike made a face and got off him.

"Pee on me and I'll murder you."

"Yeah, that's a little gross dude." El said, popping a piece of gum in her mouth. Mike gave her a smile, cheeks a bright red. She grinned at him and held her arms out. "I like this introduction a little more than the one this morning." She said, taking a couple steps towards him. He chuckled and awkwardly wrapped his arms around her and she hugged him back. Their's lasted a little longer than Dustin's, causing the other four to nudge each other grinning. They pulled away, Mike's cheeks still red, but El's were pink now.

"Wait, what do you mean the one this morning?" Will asked.

"Uh, I accidentally woke her up when I went to bed." Mike said sheepishly, pulling himself up on the counter and swinging his legs a bit.

"Michael." Max glared at him. "What did I tell you?"

"It's not like I did it on purpose. I freaking tripped and knocked some books off my desk." He said defensively. "I am sorry for waking you though." She waved him off.

"It's fine, it was funny." She said. "You looked like a kid that got caught with his hand in the cookie jar." Mike snorted.

"Felt like it. I was just like *fuck*." She chuckled.

"So, care to explain the broken finger?" Lucas asked, joining Mike at the counter. El sat at the island with the other three.

"So, first off, we're hiring at Benny's if anyone needs a job." She started. "Well, I broke Troy's nose and got him fired."

"What'd he do this time?" Mike asked.

"Grabbed my ass and *tried* with my boobs too, but I punched him before he did. Benny fired him on the spot and I'm pressing charges for sexual harassment."

"Why in the *fuck* did that perv have to fucking follow us to Chicago?" Max grumbled. "If he ever does it again I'm gonna stick my foot so far up his ass he's gonna choke to death." Lucas snorted and El laughed.

"That's very..." Will made a face instead of continuing.

"Like you haven't heard it before." Mike rolled his eyes. "Do you have any idea how many times she's said that to *me* alone?" Will raised an eyebrow

"And you two are supposedly best friends?" El asked. Mike snorted.

"Don't let her bitchiness towards me fool you. She clung to me like a koala when we got back this morning." El laughed at the glare Max sent his way. He grinned cheekily.

"You ready to get fucked up tonight man?" Dustin asked Will, clapping him on the back. "We're gonna get you a man tonight."

"Whoa, hold up." El held a hand up. Everyone looked at her and she put a hand on her hip, pointing a finger back and forth between Will and Dustin. "I need to meet said man before you do *anything* else, got it?"

"Alright, mom. You're just jealous 'cause you haven't gotten any in a while." Will stuck his tongue out at her.

"You're one to talk." She replied smugly. "But you're right." She shrugged. "Nothing wrong with that." Max cackled and Dustin snickered at the face Mike made.

"You guys better get used to it, she's just as raunchy as Dustin and has no secrets to hide." Will said, walking off down the hall.

"He's right, I've got many a secrets. Speaking of no hidden secrets, I'm about to piss myself so..." She followed him down the hall but went in the bathroom instead.

"She's something else, huh?" Lucas asked, nudging Mike, who rolled his eyes.

"Shut up." Dustin wiggled his eyebrows at Mike for a literal minute straight, without stopping. Mike stared at him and saw out of the corner of his eye the way Max and Lucas looked at each other, grinning.

"You know, I'm never telling you any fucking thing again." Mike hopped off the counter and stalked off down the hall, down to the basement. Dustin frowned.

"I pissed him off, didn't I?"

"Ya think?" Max thumped him on the head and followed Mike, who was laying face down across the two bean bags. "Eh, what's up doc?"

"Not funny." He said, voice muffled by the beanbag.

"You're gonna suffocate."

"Don't care at this point."

"Oh come on, Mike, it's not that bad." He looked at her.

"Not that bad? Bullshit."

"Okay," She flopped down on top of him, laying on his back, on her back. He let out a grunt. "Tell me why it's so bad that you wanna suffocate."

"Well one, the fact that Dustin actually told you guys-"

"Actually, he told Lucas who told us."

"Mother fucker. I'ma kill your boyfriend."

"Don't be like that, Mike. Keep going."

"Don't you think it's a little embarrassing for me to have a crush on some girl I never even talked to for two years? Because I'm a wimp that can't fucking suck it up and ask her out."

"Well ask her out now. She seemed pretty happy that you called her pretty."

"She told you guys?" He asked and she could *hear* the blush on his face.

"Yep!" She said, popping the P. "Told us during lunch yesterday. Will ships it, and frankly, I do too."

"Jesus Christ. You guys aren't gonna let me live it down, are you?"

"Why don't you just ask her out?"

"We're roommates."

"Okay?"

"And she's Will's sister."

"So?"

"Sooo, it'd be weird and awkward as hell. She'd probably say no anyways." Max sighed.

"You *do* need to suck it up. You don't want to be alone forever, do you?"

"Like I told Dustin, I'm *not* gonna be alone forever. It's *just* a crush and it *will* pass."

"You've had a crush for two years, it's not going away that easily."

"It's not gonna be the beanbag that kills me, it's gonna be you if you don't get off." He grunted, shifting so she'd fall off him. She scowled at him but crossed her arms over each other and leaned on the beanbag his head was on.

"Look at me, Wheeler." She demanded. He looked up at her, hair falling in his face. "You need to man up. You need to stop being so insecure. You should know that she's pretty interested in you. Kept asking questions about you. Like's your music."

"She's heard my music?" He perked up at that and she chuckled, nodding.

"Yep, her old roommate dragged her to one of the concerts you and Dustin played at, but she ended up really liking it."

"Cool."

"I'm serious, you should ask her out. Or something, just talk to her a bit, see if you really like her and not just her *looks*."

"I mean, it's not just her looks. She's fucking pretty as hell, but she's always nice when I see her at Benny's. Like even if she was having the worst day, she was still nice to everyone."

"You and her have that in common then." She patted his shoulder and stood up. "Quit pouting and let's go celebrate Dustin's birthday outside with cake." Mike glared at her but rolled off the beanbag and onto the floor. He held his hands up and she rolled her eyes, but pulled him up anyways. He grabbed his favorite guitar, the one that had stickers and permanent marker drawings all over it, courtesy of his sisters and friends, and walked up the stairs behind Max, just as they heard El yell,

"You guys have a pool? Why the fuck didn't I know this?" She smacked Will as the two walked back in the kitchen.

"You've been living here three days already and you haven't seen the backyard?" Mike asked, confused. She looked at him and shook her head, crossing her arms and pouting.

*Fuck, why is she so cute.*

"Max was gonna show me the backyard Wednesday but she forgot, and I forgot, and I haven't thought much of it." She told him and followed him out the back door and to where there were a few chairs set up around a table. The others were getting stuff from inside the house. "I usually hate being outside sometimes because I fucking hate any kind of bug, even lady bugs." Sitting in one of the chairs, she turned to him and patted the chair next to her. He sat down, chuckling, and put his feet up on the table. "Aren't lady bugs supposed to be like good luck or something because if they are, then it's bullshit because anytime a lady bug comes around me I like, *hurt* myself." She rambled and he just smiled at her as she talked, waving her hands in the air. "We're not supposed to kill them either but I do because I don't want them crawling on me. Is it weird that I feel bad about killing bugs afterwards even though I hate them?" He laughed at the expectant look on her face. He shrugged, plucking a couple strings.

"I mean, I don't like bugs either, really, but I have no remorse for killing them. I don't bother them if they don't bother me, like bees or wasps."

"Oh, don't get me started on those! Jesus, if I'm ever outside and you hear me scream bloody murder it's because I saw one." She shivered.

"Are we talking about being scared of bugs? Because Mike is terrified of spiders." Will popped up out of nowhere, sitting across from El.

"Spiders are fucking disgusting little eight legged creatures that should have never existed."

"They're not that bad, Mike." Max rolled her eyes.

"Not that bad? The fuck you think about spiders? You just like them because you've been in love with every guy that's played Spider-Man."

"That doesn't make sense." Lucas said, putting a cake on the table. Dustin handed Mike a lighter, a grin on his face, and the pack of candles.

"When do I ever make sense, Lucas?" Mike asked, putting his feet back on the ground. "And why do I have to light the candles? I'm not the only one that knows how to use a lighter."

"Yeah, but you're the only one who doesn't burn themselves doing it. You've mastered it by now with your smoking." Max retorted.

"I'll have you know I haven't smoked in two months." He said proudly, sticking the *two* candle in the middle and adding the *one* next to it and lighting it.

"You smoke?" El asked, crinkling her nose. He shrugged, biting his lip.

"I used to, only when I was stressed."

"He couldn't go a day without one for a while freshman year." Will said.

"Yeah because you're snoring ass kept me up at night and it gave me something to do." Mike stuck his tongue out at him and El giggled. "Okay, blow 'em out before wax gets everywhere."

## 8. Chapter 8

Saturday, September 9, 2017

"I hate my *life*." Max whined as she trudged into the living room at ten o'clock the next day. "Jesus Christ, what even happened last night?" Lucas was still asleep upstairs so she plopped on the couch next to Mike and cuddled into his side. El laughed from her spot in an arm chair, computer in her lap.

"Well, what do you remember?" He asked, putting his phone down and wrapping an arm around her.

"The last thing I remember is Dustin taking three shots in a row while I took like, six or something."

"Damn." El snickered. "You party hard, huh?"

"Just wait til your birthday, Ella Bella."

"Ella Bella?" Mike asked. "What the hell."

"It's a nickname, Noodle, what the fuck else." He scowled at her. "And I just thought it and I like it. Anyways, it's gonna be lit, and then since Mike's birthday is New Years Eve, it's gonna be even better."

"Oh so you're the youngest?" El asked, grinning.

"Still the most mature." Max snorted.

"Sure. You're also very impatient. He was born a month early."

"Fuck off, Max." He acted like he was gonna push her off but she clung to him.

"No, you're warm."

"So is your boyfriend. Or go cuddle with Will or something."

"How do you know he's warm?" She wiggled her eyebrows.

"Common sense. Don't make this dirty." She snickered.

"Besides, Will's got someone to cuddle with already. Some dude named Blake." El made a strangled sound.

"He actually got some? You go Will." She fist bumped the air and giggled, going back to her computer. Max nudged Mike, noticing the smile on his face.

"Wait," Max looked back at El. "Don't you have to be at work at eleven?"

"Oh, yeah, Benny gave me the day off to recover." She said.

"Recover from what, exactly?" Will questioned as he walked down the stairs scratching his head, a blonde haired guy following behind him. He was only a couple inches taller than Will.

"This." She held up her middle finger and he flipped one right back and walked *Blake* towards the door.

"It was nice meeting you, Blake." Will told him.

"You too. Um, can I have your number? I'm not like, some guy that just wants a one night stand." He scratched the back of his neck. Will chuckled and nodded, taking his phone and putting his number in it, texting himself to have the number. Blake left with a little dopey grin on his face, and Will shut the door and walked into the living room, laying on top of Max and tugging some of Mike's blanket off him.

"What's up with everyone attacking me today?" Mike grumbled, tugging the blanket back.

"You're warm." Will said. "And I think I'm still a little drunk."

"Nope, Max already used that excuse. Come up with something different." Will looked thoughtful for a minute or so and finally said,

"Nah, it's all I got." Mike rolled his eyes. "Where the hell is Dustin?"

"He's in the basement, passed out on the bean bags." El said, typing on her computer.

"Wait how do you know? We've been down here for like an hour." Mike raised an eyebrow. "I didn't see you go down there." She snorted.

"I'm very sneaky. And quick."

"Yeah, right." Will snorted. She scowled at him but grinned at Mike.

"I woke up around like four this morning and went to get something to drink. I heard bumping coming from down there so I went to see what it was. He was trying to play the drums so I took his drumsticks and then he went to sleep."

"Jesus." Mike shook his head.

"Why does he keep calling me your girlfriend?"

"He did it with my last roommate." He told her, and as discreetly as possible thumped Max on the head while she snickered into the blanket. "He's determined to get me a girlfriend or something, I don't know." She chuckled and nodded.

"Will's the same way." She said, looking at him pointedly. "But he actually sets me up on blind dates and shit."

"They never work out though." He replied, glaring at her.

"Because none of your *friends* can handle a tiny ball of fury most of the time."

"Tiny ball of fury, huh?" Max asked, looking at Mike and wiggling her eyebrows. Thankfully, El didn't notice, and said,

"Yep. I'll beat someone's ass if I have to. Hence why I got this." She held up her hand and the three laughed.

"What are you doing over there?" Will asked, getting off of Max and sitting in the chair next to El, scooting it closer to look at it.

"Editing pictures." She said. "And making invites for the wedding."

"Oh, I forgot you were doing that." He snickered. Lucas came

stomping down the stairs, a scowl on his face.

"What's with you?" Max asked. He saw her and his expression softened.

"For a minute I forgot you weren't here." He said. "Thought you didn't come home last night."

"Dude I literally dropped her on top of you at like two o'clock." Mike said, rolling his eyes.

"I know, but I was half asleep so I forgot. Also, thank you for going and getting them instead of making me do it."

"The only reason I did it is because you were knocked out and I was still awake." Mike pointed out, typing furiously on his phone. Lucas snorted and went in the kitchen.

"Did you pay the light bill?" He yelled.

"No, Lucas, the lights are obviously *not* on so of course I didn't- Yes I did you idiot!" Mike yelled back.

"I just woke up, fuck off."

"You fuck off, asshole." Mike mumbled.

*If I threw this bitch out the window it wouldn't help me a bit, goddammit.*

"Who are you texting?" Max asked.

"Nancy." He replied. El snickered and he glanced at her, chuckling.

"What?" Will asked.

"So you know how Mike is a deep sleeper?" El asked. They nodded. "Well, his phone is right next to his head, and Nancy called him but it didn't wake him up. It woke me up because I thought it was my alarm for some reason. It stopped ringing and immediately picked back up so I had to wake him up for him to answer it. She yelled at him so loud it scared him and he fell off the bed."

"Serves him right." Dustin mumbled as he walked in.

"Dustin, hey!" Mike said loudly.

"Ever heard of your inside voice, Michael?" Dustin scowled at him.

"I sure did! Ever heard of fucking off?" Mike grinned at him and Dustin flipped him off.

"Is Nancy texting you about moving out yet?" Dustin asked, sitting in the recliner. Mike froze, his thumbs just barely touching the screen of his phone.

"Um-

"Moving out?" Max nearly shrieked. "Excuse me?" She sat up, looking at him.

"Not from here." He mumbled.

"You're moving out of your parents house?" Lucas asked, looking at him over the island. Mike locked his phone and dropped it in his lap, sighing and running a hand through his hair.

"Yeah." He said, finally. "I was gonna tell you at some point but that dumbass had to run his mouth." Dustin stuck his tongue out at him.

"What happened to make you want to move out now?" Will asked.

"There's a lot of reasons for it, but just know I've been tempted to since before we even graduated." He said, picking his phone back up and unlocking it, texting Nancy back. "My dad is just an alcoholic asshole that has no respect for himself or anyone else, so, he decided to call me a disappointment in front of Dustin, only because I wanted to take Holly to see a movie before we left." He shrugged like it was no big deal. "Now Nancy's bitching at me about mom calling her and crying because of it. If mom actually gave a shit, she'd have done something about him before now."

"Mike-" Max started but he held a hand up, shaking his head.

"I know I'm not a disappointment, you don't have to tell me. I'm fine,

guys, really. I've dealt with it for as long as I can remember, it doesn't bother me." He stood. "I'm gonna go take a shower." Without another word, he went upstairs. Everyone was silent, staring at the empty staircase.

"Well..." El bit her lip. "That's...unfortunate?"

"I'm gonna kill that mother fucker one of these days." Max nearly growled.

"How much you wanna bet he's hanging out the bedroom window smoking?" Dustin said, taking his phone out of his pocket and playing around on it.

"Don't jinx it, jeez." Will grumbled. "You guys need to chill. Pushing him to talk about shit just stresses him out, like back in high school."

"Ugh, I'm a terrible friend." Dustin pouted.

"I don't think you're a bad friend." El said, shutting her laptop and putting it on the table. "I just think you should think a little more about what you say, depending on the situation. I was the same way when I was younger, I dealt with a lot of crazy shit before I was adopted and some people would blurt out things and trigger something in me. I guess that's what it is with Mike." She stood. "I'm gonna go make sure he's not murdering his lungs in our bedroom." As she walked up the stairs, Will watched her with a knowing smile.

"I'm so fucking happy she's my sister." He said, giggling a little. Lucas rolled his eyes at that.

*Yep, still drunk.*

"I mean, she's right though." Max said. "We have kinda always done that, to each other. I'm assuming the only reason you said anything was because of the hangover and the fact that you forgot we didn't know?" She asked Dustin, who nodded sheepishly.

"Yeah...I figured he'd have told you by now but I guess not."

"Better late then never, I guess." She shrugged. "But that asshole can suck a dick."

"Agreed."

Mike had left their bedroom door open, and was in fact, leaning out the window, smoking a cigarette.

*I'm not gonna say anything about him smoking to the others. Don't wanna be a snitch and make his cute ass mad at me. Wait, he does have a cute ass.*

She blushed lightly at the thought and walked in, plopping down at the head of her bed and sitting criss cross, facing him. She didn't say anything, but she knew he knew she was there, as he glanced at her a couple times. He smoked half the cigarette before putting it out against the windowsill and but it back in the pack. He sighed and put the window down, scratching his head and falling face first into his own bed. She chuckled.

"You okay?" She asked. He said something but it was muffled. "Dude, I don't think *anyone* could decipher what the hell you just said." He lifted his head up and snorted.

"I don't even know what I said." He replied, rolling onto his back and sitting up, crossing his legs like hers. "But I'm good. A little irritated, but good."

"I understand." She said. He raised an eyebrow at her. "You know, friends telling your other friends something you weren't ready to talk about yet. That's one of the main reasons I didn't have any friends until Wednesday. You know he's sorry, right?" Mike sighed.

"Yeah, I know. I just don't...like talking about it, you know? It doesn't really matter who I'm talking to." He shrugged.

"I understand that, too, trust me. I was in a bad place before I was adopted, and I hate talking about it."

"With your real parents?" She hesitated, but nodded. "Shit, sorry, you just said you hate talking about it."

"It's fine. My birth mom died when I was young and my birth dad was abusive. Physically, mentally, emotionally, you name it."

"Wow, I'm sorry." She waved him off.

"It's not your fault, don't apologize. Just, talk to them. Max is ready to drive back to Hawkins and murder your dad, I think, and the other three are probably thinking about it too. I can see that they love you and I haven't even known you guys a week, I've barely known you two days." He looked down at his lap, biting his lip. "And if you ever wanna talk I'm here. Will used to tell me that I should be a therapist or something but..." She shrugged. He chuckled.

"Thanks. You would make a good therapist though." She giggled and shrugged again. If *you* ever need to talk, I'm here too." He told her. She smiled brightly.

"I might take you up on that offer." She winked and he snorted. "Okay, we should probably go back down before they think we're making out or something. Will always assumes shit like that. Oh, and Dustin tried to bet that you were up here smoking out the window." Mike's cheeks turned red at the first comment, and then his eyes widened at the smoking comment.

"Seriously? What the hell!" He rolled his eyes and stood up as she started towards the door. She grinned at him.

"Don't worry, I'm not a snitch."

## 9. Chapter 9

Omg I'm sooo sorry this is late! I've been busy (AGAIN) the last couple days. I'm gonna post two just because! :D

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Thursday, October 5, 2017

7 PM

*Just ask her out, idiot. Stop being a bitch and ask her out.*

Mike was lying on his bed, guitar lying next to him, as he'd been practicing a little for he and Dustin's show next week. The quarter started last Monday, and one of he and Dustin's professors, who insisted his students just call him Zack, had scored them a slot for the concert next Friday. Everyone's already busy as hell with classes, as some professors were ruthless and didn't waste anytime. El already had a project due in two weeks, as did Lucas and Max, and Will had a couple essay's he had to write about other artists and shit, Mike didn't know exactly.

Anyways, back to the point. He's been lying in his bed for the last thirty minutes, contemplating whether or not he should actually ask El out. She was lying on her stomach on her bed, editing pictures and typing random words every once in a while, presumably for invites to the wedding. The two have become closer over the last month, almost attached at the hip, not nearly as close as he and Max usually were, but close. He finally got the courage to ask her when she spoke first, asking,

"I've been living here for like a month now, when is rent due?" He closed his mouth, mentally cursing himself. He bit his lip and looked over at her. She was looking over her shoulder at him, a couple loose hairs sticking out of her bun.

"When ever you can pay it." He shrugged.

"Okay... Well, how *much* is rent? We haven't even discussed that part." He chuckled.

"Uh, one hundred? It's what everyone else pays each month. My grandparents always make sure I have money in the bank to pay bills and such, but will *not* pay for Wi-Fi for anything. It doesn't matter how much I try to convince them, they won't do it." She looked at him, eyes wide. "What? Is that too much? I can lower it-

"No, no, it's fine! I just expected it to be like, my entire check or something."

"Oh." He chuckled. "Nah, no more than that and we're good to go. It's just to help with the Wi-Fi and groceries for the month." He told her. "I add like two hundred a month to the groceries because everyone else loves expensive shit."

"Oh, do they just give you money randomly too?" She asked. He shook his head.

"I, uh, I write short stories?" He said, but it came out as a question. "I don't know why I said that like it was a question, it's a statement. I write short stories and get paid for it. I don't do it often, it's really just when I finish writing something."

"So like, you get an idea, write it down and in a couple weeks a short story pops out? And they pay you for it?" He nodded. "That's awesome! I didn't know you were a writer!" He shrugged, sitting up.

"Eh, me writing all those campaigns for D and D got me into it, really." He said. "I'm not that good."

"You probably are. Can I read one?" She asked. He bit his lip and thought about it.

*Eh, it wouldn't hurt.*

He shrugged and rolled off his bed, going over to his drawer and opening the bottom one, grabbing the first stapled stack of paper out of the three rows. He tossed it to her and she caught it, rolling over onto her back and sitting up.

*"I'll Walk."* She read, looking at him, an eyebrow raised. He shut the drawer with his foot and plopped back down on his bed again, grabbing his guitar.

"I get a lot of my inspiration from songs. That was one of the first stories I wrote, and it's based off of the song by Bucky Covington. I just heard it on the radio one day and it just happened." He shrugged again.

"Huh." She flipped open the front page. "This definitely isn't a *short* story." She gave him a pointed look. He snorted and shrugged yet again.

"Most of 'em are pretty long." He told her. "And based off a lot of country songs, now that I think about it." She chuckled.

"Nothing wrong with that, I don't particularly *love* country music but it's not bad, at least not some of the older stuff like this song." He nodded in agreement. It was silent for a bit after that, the only sounds were El flipping page after page. She hardly noticed as he started practicing again, and was probably five or six pages through by the time he finished the first song, her eyes glued to the paper.

"GUYS! FOOD IS HERE!" Max yelled at the top of her lungs. El didn't even react. Mike chuckled and stood, tapping her on the shoulder. Her head snapped towards him so quick, she probably could've gotten whiplash.

"Huh?"

"Food's here." He told her.

"Oh." She pouted and put the story on her bed, sticking a pen that was on the table next to her where she stopped reading. "It's so good!" She gushed as the two walked downstairs. He blushed.

"What's so good?" Will asked, mouth full of chicken.

"Mike's story *I'll Walk!*" She said, bouncing on the balls of her feet. "He let me read it and I'm like half way through already. It's *amazing*." She grinned at him and grabbed a plate, filling it with KFC.

"They really are." Will nodded in agreement, taking another bite out of a chicken leg.

"Awe, look at his blush!" Max pinched Mike's cheeks and he swatted

at her, rolling his eyes. He grumbled under his breath as he fixed his own plate. They all sat in the living room to watch TV as they ate, and El was practically stuffing her face.

"Are you starving or just in a hurry?" Lucas asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Both." She said, glancing at him. She was the first one finished, so she cleaned her plate and ran upstairs, grabbing the story and running back downstairs. She plopped back down in her spot between Mike and Will and started reading again, ignoring everyone else. Dustin snickered at Mike's blush and he flipped him off.

"She hasn't blinked in five minutes." Dustin said, watching her, an eyebrow raised. "I mean, damn dude, I know you're a good writer and all but she's *into* it." Mike snorted and shrugged. A few more minutes went by and she sniffed, flipping the last page closed. She looked at him, eyes watery.

"You're fucking awesome. You made me cry and I never cry." She stated.

"it's true, she never cries." Will piped up.

"Like you wrote the actual fight at the beginning and then when she got hit, and then when he walked into the hospital and just... ugh, how?" She wiped at her eyes with her sleeves and leaned into him, wrapping her arms around his waste. His eyes widened for a second but hugged her back.

"Uh, thanks?" He said, making a face.

"You're welcome." She mumbled. Dustin snickered and Mike flipped him off. "Wow, Max wasn't wrong. You are warm." Mike snorted at that and shrugged.

"That's not even the saddest one." Lucas told her, taking a sip of his drink. Her eyes widened.

"There are happy ones though, right?" She asked, letting go of him and looking at him. He nodded.

"I've got a bunch of stories in that drawer." He told her. "You can read any of 'em anytime you want."

"You won't let us read them all." Dustin pouted.

"Yeah, because I know you guys would make fun of me for some of them, and she doesn't know me well enough for that."

"Okay, true." Max said. *"But I make fun of you for your height on a daily basis you fucking giraffe. I wouldn't make fun of your stories."* She rolled her eyes. He flipped her off. El laughed and stood up, taking the story with her.

"I'll be back." She said, running *back* up the stairs.

"Don't fall down the stairs again, El!" Will yelled.

"Fuck off William!" She yelled back. There was a thump and, "Fuck!"

"She fell." Will said, sighing.

"No I didn't! I stubbed my toe asshole!"

"You two yell a lot." Lucas said.

"Are you just now realizing this?" Mike asked, making a face at him. His phone dinged and he checked it. He sighed and looked at Dustin. "Really?"

"What?" Max asked.

"Nothing." He muttered, unlocking his phone and texting him back.

### **(Dustin & Mike)**

(7:41 PM) Dusty- have u asked her out yet? is that why she's all lovey?

(7:42) Mikey- first off, she's not all lovey. second, no, i haven't. i was about to earlier but before i could she asked about rent

(7:42) Dusty- LMAO she's all lovey. bet she likes u. anyway, y didn't you ask her after?

(7:43) Mikey- lost it  
(7:43) Mikey- it as in all fucking courage for it  
(7:44) Mikey- i spent like 30 mins trying to get the courage to ask her and lost it. fml

(7:45) Dusty- poor mikey. maybe next time!

(7:45) Mikey- \*middle finger emoji\*

Dustin snickered and put his phone on the table. Mike flipped him off for real.

"Speaking of IT." Dustin said, waving his hands, "We haven't gone to see IT yet. Is it still in theaters?"

"Yeah!" El yelled. She came back down, grinning. She had Mike's hoodie on. Mike snorted and shook his head. Yeah, she's also started stealing *that* now that he's pulled it out. She walked all the way back down and went in the kitchen. "It's still in theaters until Saturday I think." She said, grabbing a water bottle out of the fridge.

"You guys wanna go see it tomorrow?" Max asked. They shrugged. "El, do you know what the movie times are?"

"No but I can look." She sat back down and pulled her phone out of Mike's hoodie.

"My birthday is gonna suck." Lucas said randomly.

"Why?" Will asked.

"Because it's on a Friday this year. And it usually sucks when it's on a Friday."

"Boo hoo." Max mocked crying. "You're just using it as an excuse not to drink." He stuck his tongue out at her.

"Why don't you and Mike like drinking?" El asked, typing on her phone.

"Mine's simple. Dad's an alcoholic. Don't wanna be like him." Mike shrugged. She looked at him for a second and bit her lip, then turned

back to her phone.

"And I just don't like the hangover, basically." Lucas said.

"I like drinking, *sometimes*, but I'd rather do it at home or something." She said. "Oh! There's one at eight tomorrow night."

"You guys wanna go?" Dustin asked, grinning. They all agreed. "How much do you guys wanna bet that Mike will run out the first time the clown shows up." Mike stared at him for a couple seconds, and threw a throw pillow at him, smacking him in the face.

## 10. Chapter 10

Friday, October 6, 2017

9 PM

"I'm honestly surprised Mike hasn't flipped the fuck out yet." Max said, leaning forward and looking at Mike, who was sitting between Lucas and El. They were about an hour into the movie. He reached around Lucas and tugged on a piece of hair. She threw a piece of popcorn at him. It landed in his lap so he picked it up and popped it in his mouth, grinning at her.

"Why does that Richie kid look like Mike?" Lucas asked.

"He doesn't look like me." Mike made a face at him.

"Dude, yes he does. If he didn't have glasses, he'd look just like you but young."

"Yeah, the frog version of you." Dustin commented. Shockingly, and thankfully, they were the only people in the theater, so they could talk freely.

"Mike's *still* a frog." Will said.

"I thought I was a giraffe." Mike flipped him off and he snorted. The movie wasn't that bad, yeah, the clown was creepy as fuck and he'd probably have nightmares over it, but overall it was pretty funny.

"Shh!" El smacked their shoulders and kept her eyes glued to the screen. She had her feet propped up on the seat in front of her, and was almost laying down, which looked uncomfortable, but according to her, it'd been the most comfy she'd ever been in a movie theater. Mike just snorted and offered her popcorn, which she gladly accepted.

When the movie was over, they went to Waffle House, where Lucas and Dustin had tried to scare Mike by popping out from behind the car, as he and El rode in his truck together, which resulted in them both getting smacked and a laughing El. They ordered their food,

talking about the movie and Lucas' birthday. When their food arrived, El danced in her seat happily, taking a bite out of her waffles.

"Why is El the girl who sings about chicken and waffles?" Lucas asked. Mike snorted and slapped a hand his mouth, laughing.

"She totally is."

"Man, I want chicken now!"

"I think we have left over chicken from last night." Dustin said. El grinned and gave him a thumbs up.

Mike and El were once again alone on the ride home, the only sound being the music on the radio. El was lip syncing and doing little dances every once in a while, making him laugh. Watching her with a smile, he asked,

"Hey El?" She looked at him, frozen in place. "Um, do you...Do you have any song suggestions for the concert Friday?"

*Fuck. You're such a fucking wimp, Wheeler, get yourself together.*

"Oh!" She faltered for a second, then grinned. "Funhouse by Pink." She said. He couldn't help but roll his eyes at that.

"Is it because of the clowns?" He asked.

"No." She replied innocently. "I just like the song."

"Uh huh, sure." She just laughed, going back to her dancing.

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### **Friday, October 13, 2017**

Lucas was wrong about his birthday, it turned out to be one of the best ones he'd had. He had a *great* wake up call from Max, and Will made the three breakfast, since El was working and Mike and Dustin had classes at nine and eleven. Like with Dustin, El had written him a small birthday message on the whiteboard on the fridge. They watched his favorite movies until Mike and Dustin got home.

"Happy birthday!" They yelled in unison, walking in with a shit ton of balloons in each hand. Dustin had a toy flute and was making as much noise with it.

*Where the fuck did he even get that thing?*

Lucas laughed as he stood up and hugged the two, thanking them.

"You guys need to get ready, we're going to eat lunch at Benny's while she's on her break." Dustin told them. Twenty minutes later, they were in Mike's truck, singing along to the radio at the top of their lungs. When they got to Benny's, El already had their food and drinks at a table, waiting on them.

"Happy birthday!" She did jazz hands and hugged him. He snorted.

"Thanks, El." He grinned at her. They sat down and ate their lunch, talking about classes so far.

"I'm taking pictures at the concert." El said. "For my project. Or well, a project"

"What's the project about?" Will asked.

"Well, it's kinda two projects. Jamie said she wanted us to take a shit ton of pictures of stuff that make us happy and make a slide show. Both projects are of that but the one due next week is basically just to check on us but it's a separate project. I don't know, she's confusing but I love her. The main project is due at the end of the year."

"How many pictures do you have so far?" Max asked.

"Like twenty I think." She said. "I'm a procrastinator hard core." She shrugged and took a sip of her drink.

"Jane!" Someone yelled. El scowled and turned around in her seat.

"Fuck off Kali." She griped. "You know I hate that name." A short girl with long purple hair walked over, grinning widely.

"You love it."

"I really don't." Kali pulled up an extra chair and sat down, stealing one of her fries.

"Hey Will." She waved a few fingers at her.

"Who the hell are you?" Dustin asked, making a face.

"My sister."

"Sister?" Mike, Dustin, Lucas and Max said in unison.

"I don't see a resemblance." Max said.

"Not biological sisters." El said.

"Hey Mike." Kali grinned at him. He sighed.

"Hey Kali." He mumbled.

"You two know each other?" El asked, confused.

"Sadly." Mike said as Kali said,

"Gladly." And gave him a pointed look. "We technically work together. I edit his stories and make fun of him when he spells easy words wrong."

"I'm sleep deprived have the fucking time, I'm not an idiot."

"Yeah, he had all A's in middle and high school." Lucas said.

"I write more at night so." He shrugged. "Wait, why are you defending me, you make fun of me for typos when I text." He rolled his eyes as Lucas snorted.

"Hey, no bashing the birthday boy." Max pointed her fork at him and he flipped her off.

"Happy birthday." Kali said. He smiled at her. She turned to look at Mike and Kali, who were both giving her annoyed expressions. She snickered.

"So, are you two *just* roommates or?"

"Just roommates." They said quickly.

"Oh my God they were roommates." A female voice said. Mike snorted and turned to look where the voice came from. She sat a couple tables away with another girl. Her hair was short, about shoulder length and dark brown. From what he could tell, her eyes were brown and overall she was pretty. She looked at him and smiled, giving him a tiny wave. He grinned and waved back. She gave him a wink and he chuckled, turning back around.

"You two were literally just flirting without saying anything." Dustin said, and Mike noticed everyone looking at him. He blushed.

"Quit staring at me." He grumbled, sinking down in his seat and stabbing his plate.

"Mikey's got a girlfriend! Mikey's got a girlfriend!" Lucas and Dustin started chanting. He sighed and shook his head, stabbing the plate again.

"Chill dude, you'll break the plate." El said, giving what she hoped looked like a real smile.

*I shouldn't be jealous, it's not like he actually likes me back. Oh, and we're not even together.*

"Sorry." He mumbled. "Dustin, if you don't shut the fuck up, I'm gonna trip you on stage later." Dustin just snickered. "I've gotta use the bathroom, I'll be back." He stood up and made his way to the bathroom, but not before noticing the girl from a few minutes ago had disappeared but her friend was still at the table.

"My friend thinks you're cute." She told him as he walked passed her.

"She's pretty cute herself." He said, hopefully loud enough for his friends to hear. He heard someone-probably Max- gasp and start laughing. He continued on to the bathroom. He did his business and washed his hands, looking in the mirror. He sighed and ran a damp hand through his hair.

*Maybe I could fall for this girl and finally get over El? Ugh, that makes me sound terrible but I know she doesn't like me back so...*

He dried his hands completely and left the bathroom, only to walk right into the girl, who let out a tiny shriek.

"Oh my God, I'm sorry." He said, stepping back a couple times. She put a hand over her heart.

"You scared me is all." She said, laughing. She held her hand out. "I'm Abigail. You're... Mikey, I suppose?"

"Uh, yeah." He shook her hand. "I go by Mike though, they do it just to annoy me." He couldn't help but roll his eyes at them.

"My friend Adriana is the same way. I don't know if she said anything to you, but if she did, I'm sorry." He chuckled and shrugged.

"She told me you thought I was cute." He said slyly, grinning when her cheeks turned a bright shade of red. "Don't worry, I told her you were cute too." Her eyes widened a bit and she blushed harder, giggling a little.

"Thank you. Um, can I have your number? I have to go and get ready for the concert tonight and I'd love to see you again."

"Sure." He took her phone and put his number in and texted himself. "You'll actually be seeing me sooner than you think, I'm performing with one of my friends too." She gasped a little.

"Really?" He nodded. "I can't wait! I'll see you then, then!" He smiled at her and she rushed off. He walked back over to his table, noticing that El was gone. He made a face but shrugged.

"Did you get that girl's number dude?" Dustin asked. He grinned and nodded.

"Hell yeah, her name's Abigail. She's performing at the concert too."

"What about El?"

"What about her?"

"I thought you were trying to ask *her* out?" Max said. Mike shrugged.

"I don't know guys, maybe this is a good thing. I mean, this girl might actually like me, El doesn't. Not like that at least."

"You're so fucking oblivious, Mike." Will rolled his eyes. "El is jealous, that's why she went back to work early." He nodded towards El, who was taking some guys order and specifically looking in a different direction than their table. Mike sighed and shrugged.

"I *highly* doubt that. Anyways, maybe this'll be a good way to get over her. A two year crush is fucking ridiculous."

## 11. Chapter 11

Despite being a little annoyed and ticked off about this Abigail girl, she learned her name from Kali before she left, she wasn't jealous. She shouldn't be jealous, it's not like he liked her back or that they were even together, so it wouldn't be right.

Here's the thing, El's only been with a few guys in her life, and her most recent boyfriend had been the love of her life...but something happened. Something she tries her best not to think about, and as the anniversary of that thing gets closer, her mood changes quickly. She knew she liked Mike, she knew she was *falling* for him, but she didn't want to, not one bit, so, deciding that since he's gotten himself a girlfriend now, she'd distance herself from him to get rid of this *crush*.

She still took pictures at the concert, avoiding Mike and this Abigail who had found him almost immediately after he and Dustin's performance. Not to say she didn't take pictures of him, she did. More of him than anyone else, only when he was alone or with one of the guys. She took a shit ton of pictures of them on stage, a short video of them singing Funhouse and another video of them forcing Lucas on stage and singing happy birthday to him.

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**Tuesday, November 7, 2017**

"I *really* hope Mike doesn't actually fall for this girl." Dustin sighed, leaning back on a bean bag.

"Huh?" Max asked. "Shouldn't you be happy for him?" The two had already gone on a couple dates since Lucas birthday and texted constantly, but neither had really stated if they were officially boyfriend and girlfriend.

"Dustin has a plan." Lucas said, rolling his eyes. The three were messing around in the basement, drinking a couple beers after classes, Mike and El were probably upstairs in their room, not talking to each other, and Will was out with Blake, who he'd apparently been dating for the last month, on the down low, as he said. El definitely hadn't been happy with the Abigail thing, and she didn't really speak

to Mike much anymore. Only when he spoke to her or if she needed something.

"What did you do, Dustin?"

"Mike isn't exactly her type." He said, wiggling his eyebrows. She looked at him.

"She's lesbian, isn't she?"

"Somewhat." he shrugged. "She's bi, but she likes girls a lot more than guys."

"So she's lesbian."

"No. She likes dick and boobies just not at the same time."

"What the actual fuck Dustin." She said, pinching the bridge of her nose. "So what is your plan? Honestly, tell me so I can get rid of it."

"No, no, it's a good-ish plan, Max." Lucas told her. She scoffed.

"Doubt it."

"We're using Abigail to make El jealous."

"There's no *we* to it, because if this all goes downhill, it's on you." Lucas said, shaking his head. Dustin rolled his eyes.

"Anyways, she does think Mike's cute, but she has a girlfriend. Adriana, the girl she was with." He explained. "And Adriana is completely on board because she knows Abigail won't get too into the relationship."

"So what do you expect to happen, Dustin? For Mike to not fall for this girl and be fine if they date for a while and then break up? And what if he finds out, he'll be pissed at the both of you. Oh, and not to mention El isn't exactly talking to him *already*. He'll be hurt, and the chances of him and El actually getting together won't happen."

"I didn't think about that."

Meanwhile, Mike and El were on their beds, notebooks and text books in front of them, when Mike asked,

"Hey, uh, El?"

"Hm?"

"Did I do something to make you mad?" He asked. Her heart lurched at the way his voice sounded. He sounded so innocent. "I just... You used to talk to me a lot but now you've distanced yourself and if I did something to hurt you, I'm sorry."

*Yeah, you're dating Abigail- Ugh, don't think like that. He's not yours.*

"You didn't do anything, Mike." She told him honestly. "It's all me. I just don't want Abigail to think you're cheating or anything with me, since we're roommates." She thought of that vine and cussed at herself for it immediately after.

"What? No, she knows there hasn't been anything between us."

*You sure about that?*

"On our first date I told her that me and you were like best friends, despite the fact we've only known each other for a few months, and that she didn't have to worry about that." El nodded.

"I'm sorry." She muttered, looking down. "I'm not doing too well emotionally right now either so that isn't helping anything." He didn't say anything for a couple seconds, so she figured he just went back to studying, but then he said,

"Um, are you okay? I- Well, obviously you're not but... What happened? You don't have to tell me. It's none of my business." He ducked his head as she looked over at him. She smiled a small smile.

"I'm okay, I guess. Something happened a couple years ago and the anniversary is coming up in two weeks and it still hurts." She shrugged. "I'll tell you about it one day but..."

"I understand." He said. "You don't *have* to tell me, but if you ever want to or just need someone to talk to...I'm always here."

"I know." She smiled. "Thank you. I'm sorry I haven't been talking to you."

"Nuh uh, don't apologize. It's fine." He stood up. "I'm gonna get something to drink, do you want anything?" He asked.

"Uh..." She bit her lip. "A coke?"

"Gotcha. I'll be back in like two minutes."

Two minutes turned into at least ten, and when he came back up, his whole demeanor had changed.

*I'm gonna kill that mother fucker one day.*

"You okay?" El asked as he handed her her drink.

*Oh yeah, I'm fine. My supposed best friend set me up with a fucking lesbian to make you jealous, but I'm fine.*

"Yeah, I'm good. Just stubbed my toe like a jackass." He joked, giving her a smile.

*I'd be somewhat okay with it if I knew about the plan and if it would actually work, but it's not.*

"You sure?" She asked. He nodded.

*I just need to have a chat with Abigail and see what she says about it.*

He flopped on his bed and pulled his phone out, going into his texts.

**(Mike & Abigail)**

(4:47 PM) Mike- Hey Abby?

(4:48) Abigail- Yes?

(4:50) Mike- ik i prob asked you like two days ago but are you free Fri?

(4:51) Abigail- Yeah! What do you have in mind?

(4:52) Mike- eh maybe just grab lunch and go to the park?

(4:53) Abigail- sure! I can't wait! 3

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**Friday, November 10, 2017**

"Are you okay?" Abigail asked, looking up at him. She was no where near as short as El, at around five eight. They walked hand in hand through the park, and where he was usually talkative on their dates, he'd been quiet.

"Uh, no, actually. I need to talk to you." She frowned and nodded, gesturing to an empty picnic table. They sat across from each other and Mike bit his lip.

"You're telling me you don't want to date anymore, aren't you?" She asked. He looked at her.

"Actually, no. You know how we aren't *official* with everyone else?" She raised an eyebrow and nodded. "I want you to be my fake *girlfriend* and not just a fake date or whatever." Her eyes widened at that.

"What are you talking about?"

"Dustin and his plan." He shrugged. "I heard him talking to Max and Lucas on Tuesday so I figured I'd just help make it seem like their plan is actually working."

"Mike, I'm so sorry-"

"No, don't worry about it. I understand you're just trying to help. I'm not mad." He shook his head, taking one of her hands in his. "Not at you, at least. I'm gonna give it a little while longer just to see what happens and then I'm gonna hand it to him."

"Don't beat him up too bad." She joked. He chuckled.

"So what do you say about the fake girlfriend thing? I mean, if you want to we can just stop."

"I wasn't lying when I said you were cute and I liked you, Mike." She told him honestly. "You are, and if El can't see that then it's her loss, because in the month I've known you, you're possibly the best straight guy friend I've ever had." He snorted at that. "I'll be your fake girlfriend. And I certainly hope that Dustin didn't tell your friends that I like boobies more than dick." He looked away, holding in a laugh. "Oh my God! He did, didn't he?" Mike laughed and nodded.

"He did, the dumb fuck." He shook his head. "And we, by all means, *don't* have to do all the hand holding and kissing and cuddling shit if you don't want to, you already know I'd rather do it with El- Wait, that sounded wrong." She giggled.

"I know what you mean. She's hot." She winked. "And I don't mind doing that, I want to be an actress, remember?"

"Right."

"And Adriana knows that I might be kissing you, and she wouldn't be opposed either, she told me you were hot too."

"Has she seen me?"

"Mike!" She smacked his arm. "You *are* hot, but my lovely girlfriend is *hotter*."

"I'd agree but I'm not sure if you'd slap me."

## 12. Chapter 12

She snorted and rolled her eyes.

"I wouldn't since I agree and I know you've got the hots for someone else." She glanced to the left and stood up, pulling him with her. "Your friends are over there and I think they're watching us." She whispered to him before pulling him closer and planting one right on the lips.

"Holy shit!" He faintly heard Dustin shriek. "Get it Mike!" Abigail pulled away from him and he blinked, tilting his head a bit.

"You're lips are so soft." She told him, giggling a little. He snorted and covered his eyes, a blush forming as he shook his head.

"I'd have kissed back but I was just surprised."

"I know." She winked at him and pulled him with her, towards their friends, holding his hand tightly.

"Are you guys stalking us?" Mike asked, looking at them accusingly.

"Maybe-" Lucas shoved Dustin and rolled his eyes.

"El wanted to come to the park and watch the fireworks they're showing tonight." Will explained. "And I decided that since it's her birthday tomorrow, we'd all come with her."

"I didn't know you guys were coming! I'd have brought my guitar." Mike said cheekily.

"So, seeing as we caught you guys sucking face, are you official yet?" El joked. Mike bit his lip to keep from telling the truth and just looked down, feigning bashfulness and nodded.

"Yeah."

"You dog!" Dustin clapped him on the back and Mike glanced at Abigail, who gave him a look.

"She kissed me, dipshit." He muttered, shaking him off.

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## Tuesday, November 21, 2017

For El's birthday, they went to dinner at her favorite restaurant, went home and ate cake, everyone drank a little, except for Mike (of course), and then gave her her presents. Will bought her a charm for her charm bracelet, which was shaped like a waffle, whereas he'd stated,

"I've been looking for a goddamn waffle charm for the last two years and I found it, happy birthday."

Lucas, Max and Dustin weren't sure what to get her so they chipped in and paid for her a spa day (that she and Max both would go to the Saturday after and *loved*) and Mike got her a new strap for her camera, that was black and had her name stitched on it in purple, which she loved and hugged him to death over.

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## 7 PM

"Guys, I think Mike's dead." El told them, walking into the kitchen where the other four had been making dinner. Well, Will was making dinner and the other three were somewhat helping, more so just playing around like toddlers.

"Why's that?" Lucas asked.

"He's in bed."

"This early? Do you think he's sick?" Will asked. She shrugged.

"I poked him in the side and he just grunted, and usually he giggles like a little girl but..." She shrugged. "And isn't it weird that he hasn't packed at all today?"

"Packed for what?" Dustin asked, popping a fry in his mouth.

"To go back home for break." She rolled her eyes.

"Oh."

"I asked him what was wrong but he just buried his face in a pillow. He hasn't touched a thing that has to do with packing."

"I'll go see what's up." Max said, jogging up the stairs.

"Do you think Abigail broke up with him or something?" Will asked. "Maybe that's why." El felt a spark of hope at that but immediately felt bad, because if that's the case, then it hurt Mike and she doesn't want him to hurt. She shrugged and felt her eyes sting.

"I don't know. I need to talk to you." She said quietly. He nodded and looked at Dustin and Lucas.

"Don't burn the kitchen down while we're gone." They stuck their tongues out at him but nodded, and he and El went outside.

"What's up?" He asked. She bit her lip and looked down, trying to fight back tears.

"I miss him." She whispered, attempting to keep her voice from cracking. It hardly worked.

"Oh El." He pulled her in for a hug and she hugged him back tightly. "I know you miss him."

"It's been three years." She whimpered.

"I know." He rubbed her back comfortingly.

"And I feel bad because I-I told him," She hiccuped, "before he d-died, that there would never be another." He just kept rubbing her back as she tried to calm herself. "And I-I...I like Mike. Like, I like him like him and I think I'm falling in love with him and I shouldn't. I can't do that to him." She started sobbing harder and he waited a couple minutes before he replied.

"Look, Ellie, I know it hurts." He whispered to her as he stroked her hair. "Bradley would want you to be happy, you know that. He was your first love, and he won't be your last."

"I loved him so *much* Will."

"I know you did. He'd want you to move on, I know it for a fact." He kissed her head. "If you need proof, I have it. He gave me a letter to give to you, stating the fact."

"What?" She pulled away, looking at him, her mascara and eyeliner smeared across under her eyes.

"He trusted me to give it to you, Ellie." He said softly. "Only me, he said. He told me to give it to you when you fell in love again and now is a good time as any. Come on." She hiccuped and nodded, wiping her nose.

During their talk outside, Max strutted into Mike's room and jumped onto his bed with him, lifting up his arm and wiggling until she was half underneath him.

"What's wrong?" She asked.

"Nothing." He turned his head so his face was back in the pillow.

"Hey, quit trying to suffocate yourself around me." She snatched the pillow out from under him and watched his face hit the mattress.

"Fuck off Max."

"Nope, not until you tell me what's wrong." She shook her head, even though he couldn't see her. "Did Abigail break up with you?" He snorted at that but shook his head.

"No, she didn't."

"Okay then, if that's not what it is and if you're not gonna *tell* me what's wrong, then why haven't you packed to go home?"

"What home?" He scoffed, lifting his head and looking at her, eyebrows furrowed. "I don't have a *home* to go back to."

"Excuse me? What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I said. I'm no longer welcome at *home* since I moved

out."

"I'm gonna kill that mother fuck-

"It wasn't him." He said, rolling over and sitting up. "It was my *mom*." Her jaw dropped.

"Are you fucking serious?" She asked. He nodded.

"Yep. She *texted* me this morning and told me that I wasn't invited home for Thanksgiving or Christmas since I'm such an adult and can make my own choices."

"What the *actual fuck* Mike? What did you say?"

"I told her I didn't plan on it anyways." He shrugged.

"You say that like you don't care." She raised her eyebrows.

"Because I don't. Thanksgiving would end up in disaster, just like the last time I was home."

"So what are you gonna do? Just stay here for the rest of the week by yourself? You're gonna be by yourself on Thanksgiving?" He shrugged.

"I'm sure Abigail will come over at some point." He said, knowing she won't as she had a family who actually cared about her.

"Come to my house for Thanksgiving." Max said.

"You're not going to your house, you're going to Lucas'."

"So come to *Lucas'* house with me. You know they wouldn't mind."

"Not happening, Max." He shook his head. "They live right next to my parents house, and if they see that I'm over there they'll freak the hell out." Max sighed and stood up.

"You know what? Lemme grab my phone, I'm gonna go raise some hell." She said, marching out of his room. He scrambled to get off the bed and ran after her. By the time he reached the kitchen, she was

about to tap the cal button but he snatched her phone out of her hand before she had a chance to.

"What the fuck, Mike?" She exclaimed. He held her phone out of reach.

"You're not going to call her, Max." He said, shaking his head. He looked up at the phone and deleted his mom's number from her phone.

"Give me my goddamn phone, Mike, I swear to God." She nearly yelled, glaring at him.

"Call who?" Dustin asked.

"His bitch of a mother, that's who!"

"Hey, whoa what the hell is going on in here?" Will asked, he and El walking in. Mike dropped Max's phone when he saw El, but Max caught it. He rushed over to her as Max unlocked her phone.

"You asshole! Why'd you delete the number?" She exclaimed, stomping her foot. He ignored her and went to El.

"What's wrong? What happened?" He asked. She sniffed.

"I'm okay." She said. He raised an eyebrow but she continued before he had a chance to say anything. "It's the anniversary of that thing I told you about."

"Oh. Um, can I hug you?" He asked quietly, glad that everyone else was arguing with Max. She nodded and held her arms out to him. He hugged her tightly and rubbed her back. She hugged him back tightly, burying her face in his chest. After a minute or two, they pulled away from each other but kept an arm around each other's waists.

"What the hell is going on?" Will asked him. "Max is too busy cussing your mom out to answer."

"She texted me and told me I wasn't invited back home basically ever." He shrugged. Will's jaw dropped, as did Dustin and Lucas', the

same way Max's did. "So I'm staying here over break."

"No you're not." Lucas said. "You can come to my house."

"If they see me over there they'll freak the fuck out, you know that. And I don't want to bother you guys."

"I don't care."

"You can stay with us." El said, looking up at him.

"I couldn't-

"You will, end of discussion. Now, I'm gonna go wash off my face since I look disgusting." She walked away and went upstairs. Mike watched her go and the other four were silent.

"Mom would love to have you over, Mike." Will said. "You're like a son to her, she's told me that a shit ton. And besides, I'm pretty sure Nancy and Steve are coming over for Thanksgiving too."

"It's already settled." He grumbled. "I can't say no to her."

"Whipped." Dustin coughed. Lucas punched his arm and Mike sucked in a deep breath, choosing to ignore him completely.

"I'm gonna go pack." He said, finally. He looked at Max. "I hope you're not mad at me too."

"I'm not mad at you. I just want to cuss the bitch out, and if I ever see her in public I will." He just shrugged and nodded, before following El upstairs.

## **13. Chapter 13**

**Thank you guys for reading and reviewing! You guys are awesome!**

**The next update will be on: July 16**

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When El walked out of the bathroom, she jumped at the sight of Mike sitting on his bed with a few piles of clothes next to a suitcase.

"Jesus Christ." She said, putting a hand over her heart. He chuckled.

"Sorry."

"Do you need help packing?" She asked, walking over and sitting on the bed, not giving him a chance to answer as she started folding a pair of boxers. He stared at her. "These are clean, right?" She asked. He nodded, biting his lip to keep from laughing.

"Thanks." He said, grabbing a shirt and folding it. They ended up side by side as they folded his clothes and put them in the suitcase. Neither said anything, they just sat in a comfortable silence until El said,

"When I was 18, the guy I loved died." She said quietly. He stopped in the middle of folding a pair of pants and looked at her. "It was three years ago today." She sighed, wringing her hands. "He had a brain tumor, and they couldn't get it out without killing him. He was in the hospital for three months before he died, and I would stay the night, go to school, and go back. I almost didn't graduate."

"Bradley Louis..." Mike said softly. "I remember him, he was my science partner in ninth and tenth grade. I didn't know you guys were together."

"Not many people did. We kept it quiet. We were gonna get married, have kids but... that obviously can't happen now. I told him I'd never love another man and it hurts that I'm starting to." She sighed, tilting her head back a bit, blinking a couple times to keep the tears from

falling.

"I think he'd want you to move on." Mike said after a few minutes.

"That's what Will said." She chuckled. "It's hard."

"I know it has to be. And I know that whoever you fall in love with, will be the luckiest man on earth, and Bradley would be happy to know it." She looked at him, silent tears rolling down her cheeks.

*It's you.*

She wanted to tell him so bad, but she couldn't. Not yet, especially because he has a girlfriend. She mentally scolded herself and wiped her eyes with her sleeves and sniffed.

"Thank you, Mike." She said, putting her head on his shoulder and her arms around his waist. He hugged her back and leaned back on his pillows, and she curled into his side. They fell asleep that way.

"Hey El? Here's the-" Will stopped short when he saw them curled up together and raised an eyebrow. He took a quick picture and moved the suitcase off the bed, folding the last few pieces of clothes and tossing them in it, before grabbing El's blanket off her bed and draping it over them. He put the letter on the table beside her bed and left, turning the light off and shutting the door lightly.

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**Wednesday, November 22, 2017**

**8 AM**

The two didn't wake up until the next morning, still curled up together, but with a blanket over them. Mike woke up first and just watched El sleep for a few minutes and couldn't help but think.

*Who is she falling for? Could it be- No, idiot, definitely not you. Why am I even thinking like this? This whole me and Abby relationship thing isn't doing anything for this jealousy Dustin was going on about anyways, so I might as well just call it quits all together because it ain't benefiting anyone. I'll text her later or something.*

"Mm, Mike?" El mumbled, shifting slightly, opening her eyes and

blinking sleepily. He smiled down at her.

"Morning, shorty, sleep well?" She nodded and yawned, and after a few seconds realized she was laying half on top of him. She sat up and turned to him with a sheepish grin.

"Sorry."

"It's okay." He chuckled. She smiled, then frowned.

"No it's not, you have a girlfriend. I shouldn't have even been on the same bed as you." She shot up and jumped on her bed. He sat up.

"Hey, no, no, we uh... We broke up." He said. She made a face.

"But you said you were still together yesterday. I heard Max tell Dustin that." Mike shook his head.

"It was a mutual thing, we're better off as friends." He explained.

"Oh. Are you okay?" She asked. He nodded.

"Yeah, I'm fine. It didn't really phase me much." She bit her lip and nodded. She looked to her right and saw the envelope with her name on it. She swallowed and picked it up.

"Um..." She coughed lightly. "Are you going to take a shower?" She asked.

"Nah, I'll take one after breakfast. You can go ahead." She smiled in thanks and went in the bathroom, shutting the door lightly. Mike got up and stretched, then headed down stairs, where Dustin was in the kitchen with Lucas making breakfast. Mike leaned against the counter and crossed his arms, watching Dustin flip a couple pieces of bacon over. Lucas raised an eyebrow at Mike but he ignored him. After a couple minutes, Dustin noticed Mike and grinned.

"Morning, Mike!" He said cheerfully.

"Abigail and I broke up." Mike replied.

"What? Why?" Dustin nearly yelled.

"You seem an awful lot more upset over it than me." Mike raised an eyebrow and titled his head to the side. Dustin coughed into his fist and said,

"Oh, uh, no. I just... I thought you two were good together. Why'd you breakup?" He asked, glancing at Lucas who just shook his head.

"Well, for starters, she has a girlfriend." Mike stated and Dustin's eyes nearly bugged out of his head.

"I-What-How did you know?" He exclaimed. "Did she tell you?

"You have a *very* loud mouth." Mike said, shaking his head. "I heard you telling Max about it in the basement." He said. "I was going to get El and I some drinks and I heard you."

"But, but you two kissed!" Will walked in then.

"Who kissed?" He asked.

"Mike and Abigail." Dustin replied.

"Yep, that was the same day I talked to her about the little plan."

"What plan?" Will asked, confused. Mike looked at Dustin who looked down guiltily and told Will about his plan. Will smacked Mike.

"What did I do?"

"You went along with it!"

"What? No I didn't."

"Yeah, you did, seeing as you faked being together to make El jealous. What would you do if she found out? She's already having a hard enough time with falling for you and not thinking you like her back *because* of Abigail."

"I didn't know about it until a month after we started *dating*." Mike scowled. "And even if she found out, it's not like it would- Wait, *what*?"

"Yeah, she's falling in love with you." Will glared at him. "She made a promise to Bradley that she'd never fall in love with another man—"

"Yeah... She told me that last night."

"Okay, so you understand that her falling for you is a *hard thing for her to do*. She'd be hurt that you lied above all."

"It wasn't about making her jealous to begin with, not on my end, at least." He glared at Dustin. "I honestly thought Abigail was pretty, and she is, so I was like maybe I'll go out with her, try dating someone else and get over this crush I have on El, because having a fucking crush for years to someone you've never talked to is ridiculous, and there was no chance she'd like me back so..." He shrugged. "I'd never want to hurt El. And it's not like I'm gonna ask her out or anything now anyways. I know she's having a hard time and it's all up to her, whenever she's ready. I'm pretty sure I love her too, so the feelings mutual."

"Mike—"

"I'm done talking to you for now, Dustin." Mike said, turning his attention back to Will. "And if you want to punch me for sounding like an ass or anything, feel free to do so. I'd never hurt El. I know I probably sound like the biggest douche bag for using another girl to get over her but I didn't want it to be that way."

"I understand, Mike." Will told him. "I agree on the douche bag thing, just a *tad* bit, but I know what you meant, and I know you wouldn't hurt her. And if you do, I'll beat your ass." He gave him a look and Mike chuckled. "Not to mention what Hop would do." Mike's eyes widened and Will laughed. "Just give her time, Mike, she'll come around, I know it."

What they didn't know, was that El had needed to get something from the laundry room and heard the last bit of the conversation, *not* hearing the part about using Abigail to make her jealous, and was internally freaking out a bit.

*He loves me?!*

## 14. Chapter 14

I mean it's technically the 16th XD. It's 12 AM for meee! I only have ten more pre-written chapters, and once I finally catch up, here will only be an update once a week! (This story is up to chapter 23 over on AO3 btw :D)

The next update will be on: July 18

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El had absolutely no idea how to act after finding out Mike loved her. She ran back to the bathroom without getting what she needed, shut the door and slid down it until she was sitting on the floor. For a minute or two, she sat there staring at the letter she just read, and grabbed it, rereading it.

*My love,*

*If you're reading this, that means you're falling in love again. Promise me that you WILL love again, Ellie, because I promise you I won't be angry. I want you to be happy, whether it's with me or another man. I promise I'll love you no matter what, even if you love another. You deserve the world, you deserve a man that'll take care of you for years to come. I hope you find him. There's another letter in the envelope, that I want you to give the man you plan to marry. I have a couple rules and guidelines for him, because he'll need it with you, and I mean that in the MOST endearing way possible. Always be yourself, El, never change for ANYONE, and I mean it. That's all, I think. Well, not all, there's too many words for me to say to show you how much I love you, and that I'll always love you. Like I said earlier, I want you to be happy no matter what, okay? I know you can't tell me to my face, but promise me you'll love again. I don't want you to ever be alone.*

*I love you so much, El. Always remember that*

*Love, Bradley*

She didn't realize she'd been crying again until she saw a few tears hit the paper. She sniffed and wiped her eyes, hugging it to her chest and looking up at the ceiling. She felt a smile creeping up on her face,

and she could feel her heart beat in her chest, a tingling in her belly. She knew what these feelings were...love. Feelings she felt for Bradley, feelings she'll always have for him but... Now, she had new feelings, and these were for Mike, and she promised herself, and Bradley, and even Mike, that she would tell him soon.

"I promise."

---

It was after one o'clock when everyone finally left. Dustin and Will were taking Will's car, Mike is letting Lucas and Max take his truck, and he's riding with El. She hadn't exactly said much since this morning, but he figured it was because of Bradley, so he didn't let it bother him. On the ride back, he texted Abby and told her what had happened this morning, and told him that if he ever needed anything to let her or Adriana know, and he was thankful, later on down the road, when he really did need Adriana's help, but not for a reason you expect. Adriana's a lawyer, a couple years older than Abby, and a very good one, at that, and has connections that Mike'll need in the near future.

Meanwhile, El's mind was exploding with so many thoughts and feelings, forcing herself to keep quiet or she would tell Mike the truth, and she did NOT want to do that while they were on the road. She'd decided that she was going to wait until they got back to Chicago after break, knowing he would have a hard time this week after the whole thing with his mom. The silence broke about an hour into the drive when a particularly loud burp came from El, and she slapped a hand over her mouth. She blinked and after a second, glanced at Mike, who was staring at her, eyes wide. After another second or two, he snorted and burst into laughter. It took her a minute to join him, and when she did, she felt the happiest she's been in weeks.

They did eventually go back to silence, other than the music Mike played. He occasionally asked her what song she wanted to listen to and he'd play it. About ten minutes away from Hawkins, his phone rang. El reached over and turned the radio down as he answered, it was Holly.

"Hey Hols!" He said happily.

"Where are you going to stay?" She asked immediately. He furrowed his eyebrows.

"I'm staying with Will and his family, they offered so... Why?"

"Will I get to see you or Nancy at all?"

"Of course! I wouldn't come to Hawkins and not see you, Holly." She didn't say anything for a minute, and he heard her sniff. "What's wrong?"

"I just... mom isn't cooking Thursday." She said. "And... and you and Nancy won't be home like usual. I don't want to be alone." If it was possible, Mike's heart would have dropped to his stomach at her words. He swallowed.

"You won't be alone, Holly, I promise. We'll be in Hawkins in ten minutes and I'll come pick you up, okay? If I need to, we'll go and get a hotel room and we'll stay there so you won't be at home, okay?"

"Okay." She sniffed again.

"You don't have to do that, Mike." El told him. "The both of you can stay with us, we have plenty of room."

"Would Mrs. Byers mind?"

"Not at all." He nodded.

"Okay, Holly?"

"Yeah?"

"We're gonna stay at Will's house until I leave, are you okay with that?"

"Yeah. What about mom and dad though?"

"If they have a problem with it, I'll deal with them, okay? You should go pack you a bag. Do you want me to stay on the phone with you until we get there or?"

"No, I'll be okay. Text me when you get here, though."

"I will. I love you."

"I love you too." She hung up. Mike just let his phone fall in his lap. He ran a hand through his hair and let out a long sigh.

"I swear, the second I finish college I'm taking those fuckers to court and I'll raise her myself." He grumbled. "And that's a goddamn promise." He tapped his fingers on his knees. El didn't know what to say, so instead of saying anything, she reached over and took his hand in hers and intertwined their fingers together. Eventually, she said,

"I know you will. And she'll be happy with you, I know it."

---

Mike didn't even have to text Holly, she was already outside, waiting for them to arrive. The second Mike stepped out of the car, she was in his arms, hugging him tightly. He hugged her back and leaned down, kissing her on the top of her head.

"I know you haven't been gone long but I missed you." She mumbled into his shirt.

"I missed you too, Hols. But hey, we get almost an entire month together next month!" He said, pulling away and smiling at her.

"Why do you have to go back next week?" She whined.

"We have midterms." He told her. "Just like you. Come on, let's go. We don't want to keep El waiting, right?"

"Right." She muttered. She got in the back seat and he put her bag next to her and got back into the passenger seat.

"Hi Holly!" El said, smiling back at her.

"Hey El." She smiled back. "I haven't seen you in forever."

"I know, it's been a while, huh? You've gotten taller." She gave her a look. Holly nodded.

"Mhm. Last time I got a check up my doctor said I'd be taller than Nancy. I'll be closer to Mike's height." Mike chuckled. El smiled and started to drive.

"She did say that, didn't she?"

"Yep! I just hope I'm not taller than any guys I date." Mike coughed and El giggled at the face he made.

"Whoa there, don't you worry about no boys yet. You're not allowed to date until you're thirty."

"But that's so *old*!"

"Hey, you dont wanna catch cooties, do you?" El asked, wiggling her eyebrows.

"Oh, ew! No, never mind." She shivered. Mike looked at her and mouthed *thank you*. She just grinned back at him. "Dad makes me wash dishes and clean up the house because mom doesn't anymore." The smile on his face dropped and he tensed up. "He said a lot of bad words about her but then he told me that it was to practice for when I get married. He said I had to be a loyal housewife."

"Don't listen to him, Holly." Mike said, balling up his fists. "You should know how to do those things, yes, but it's not what you're going to do when you get married. You do what *you* want to do, and not what anyone else says."

"I could be a farmer if I wanted to?" She asked, eyes wide. El giggled a little and he relaxed a little.

"If you wanna be a farmer, you can be a farmer."

"Why do you want to be a farmer, Holly?" El asked.

"Because there are horses on a farm." She explained. "And chickens, goats, pigs, bunny's, sheep and a lot of other animals and I love animals." Mike couldn't help but smile at her enthusiasm.

"It sounds like it! I like animals too. When I'm a little older and have my own place, I want to get a cat or a dog." El told her.

"Can I name it?" She asked. El grinned and nodded.

"Of course you can.

## 15. Chapter 15

Oof okay early-ish chapter for the guests who have questions! I try to update at least once a week, on the same day. If not, it's usually a day or two after. I'm not entirely sure if I'll be able to continue to update as much once school starts back in August, so I'll try and write a few pre-written chapters for you guys!

Also, I asked on AO3: How long are you guys willing to read this series? Like, I'm all for marriage and babies eventually, would you guys want something like that?

If you have any more questions, you can review here and I'll make a quick A/N to answer, or you can message me on Tumblr at milevenreddies or on my email milevenreddiesfanfic (gmail) if that's easier for you! It's for that specifically, though you guys might think it's lame lmao.

---

Mike's mood improved a little by the time they reached the Byers/Hopper house. Will had already dropped Dustin off and arrived before them and Hopper and Joyce were outside waiting for El on the porch. He couldn't help but envy her, having two parents that actually cared about her. Don't get him wrong, he was happy for her, but he wanted it too. He let them have their moment and got out, opening Holly's door for her and taking her bag and throwing it over his shoulder. He shut the door back and held a fist out to her. She giggled and fist bumped him.

"Mike!" Joyce exclaimed, hardly giving him a chance to turn around before she was hugging him. He froze for a second, not expecting it, but hugged her back with a smile.

"Hey, Mrs. Byers." She patted his back.

"How many times do I have to tell you to call me Joyce?" She said, looking up at him.

"Infinite." He replied with a grin. She rolled her eyes fondly and let him go. She hugged Holly for a couple seconds.

"I'm excited to have you here, Holly." She said warmly. "Both of you, as well as Nancy and Steve, right?"

"Uh, I think so. I haven't talked to Nancy recently." He said, running a hand through his hair. She raised an eyebrow at him. He made a face. "What? Do I have something on my face?"

"No, you need a hair cut." She replied, reaching up and ruffling his hair. He chuckled.

"He won't do it, mom." El said, walking over to them with Hopper in tow. "A couple weeks after I moved in I told him he needed to cut it but he won't."

"I like his hair." Holly said, reaching up and jumping, attempting to touch his hair. He rolled his eyes but crouched for a second to let her mess with it.

"I like it too, but I don't know how he deals with it. It looks so thick." She said.

"It is thick." Mike replied.

"Feel!" Holly grabbed El's hand and tugged her forward, almost knocking her down on top of Mike but he caught her by the waist and then immediately retracted his hands in embarrassment. He didn't see the look between Joyce and Hopper. He felt El's hands in his hair and then her small gasp.

"Oh my God, it's so soft!" She said, lightly touching it. He snorted.

"Okay, when did Mike turn into a dog?" Will asked, walking outside.

"Have you ever felt his hair before?" El asked. She was in literal awe at it and Mike could hardly keep a straight face. She didn't let Will reply and said, "Come touch it!"

"That's what she said." Hopper coughed and Mike snorted.

"I'd rather not feel up my best friend's hair, thank you very much." Mike rolled his eyes and stood up. His knees cracked and El cringed.

"Ew, never do that again."

"Can't promise that." He shrugged. He turned to Hop and bit his lip, holding a hand out.

"Hey, Chief." Hopper shook his hand but pulled him in for a quick hug. It happened so quick Mike hardly processed it.

"Call me Hop." He told him. Mike nodded. "Don't be scared of me, kid, you haven't done anything...yet." He gave him a look and Mike swallowed, giving him a nervous smile.

"Okay so, I'm making you guys a late lunch." Joyce stated, clapping her hands. "And I got Jonathan's room ready for you, Mike, since he won't be coming home this week."

"Oh, he's not?" Mike asked, confused. She shook her head.

"He wants to, but he's snowed in." She explained. "No planes are coming in or leaving until next week. He's gonna try and come visit for a weekend I think, or probably just wait until Christmas and come home for two weeks." She babbled. He chuckled and nodded, following her into the house with he, El, *and* Holly's bags in tow. He put El's by the couch, as he didn't know where to put them, and went with Joyce to Jonathan's room. "I pulled the air mattress out but I haven't blown it up yet, I figured you'd rather wait until later so it wouldn't be in the way. And you two can fight it out over who gets which." She gave him a look and he snorted.

"Me and Hols don't argue as much as me and Nancy, right Hols?" He asked, booping her nose. She crossed her eyes but grinned and nodded.

"I can sleep on the air mattress because I know your legs are way too long." She said, shrugging. "Like a baby giraffe. Wait, no, you're like that spider with the really long legs." Mike's mouth dropped open.

"Daddy Long Legs?" Joyce offered, attempting to keep from laughing.

"Yeah, that! Especially when you wear black pants." She grinned at him. He pouted.

"You people are so mean to me." He whined and crossed his arms over his chest and went back in the living room, where El and Will were sitting on either end of the couch. He plopped between them, still pouting.

"Awe, is the poor wittle baby upset?" El asked, poking his cheek. He glared at her playfully and mumbled something. "I'm sorry, what was that?"

"Holly said I look like a Daddy Long Legs when I wear black pants." He grumbled. "What's so bad about long legs? I mean, Hop has long legs too, he's taller than me."

"You've got more leg than I do, kid." Hopper said, reclining back in his chair.

"Your legs are twice as long as mine, dude." El said, bringing her knees up to her chest and looking at him.

"Just when I thought I had a sweet sister, she had to turn on me." He sighed dramatically.

"So dramatic." El rolled her eyes.

"That's nothing knew." Will told her. "You should see him with his cousin, Jesus, that's a sight to see."

"Who, Richie?" Joyce asked. He nodded. "I swear, you two could be twins if you weren't five years apart."

"He's also annoying as hell."

"How have I not heard of this Richie?" El asked. Holly skipped into the living room and squeezed her self between Will and Mike, the latter scooting a little closer to El.

"Mikey doesn't like him."

"Whoa, hold up, I *do* like him, I love him but God he's more annoying than Dustin, and that's saying something."

"Damn." El muttered. "Didn't think that was possible." Mike snickered.

"Like when I had to act like his mom when he was playing the drums at like four in the morning when he was drunk and I first moved in." He snorted and nodded.

"Richie's just... Richie. Eddie sends videos of him being a jackass sometimes. I'll show you at some point." She nodded, grinning at him.

"Speaking of you moving in, how does that work?" Hopper asked him.  
"Like the bills and all?"

"My grandparents pay everything." Mike explained. "I've tried to get them to let me pay but they're hard headed. Runs in the family." He muttered the last part. "Everyone just has to pay a hundred a month, for WiFi, since they outright refuse to pay for that, and groceries."

"Five hundred a month for groceries?" Hopper questioned.

"Eh, about seven hundred, actually. I add two hundred to it." Hopper raised an eyebrow.

"I didn't think you had a job?"

"I wouldn't really call it a job, job. I just... I write short stories and Kali, actually, edits them and I get paid for it."

"Oh my God, they're so good!" El exclaimed, clapping her hands excitedly. "He let me read one a couple weeks ago and I cried." Hopper raised another eyebrow. "Like, it was based off the song I'll Walk and it was just amazing. I've read a couple more. I keep telling him he should try writing an entire novel but he won't do it." Mike blushed at the praise.

"I told you I might one day." He mumbled, all bashful.

"I figured you'd do something like that, stories or screen writing." Joyce said. "Because of how you wrote those campaigns." He shrugged.

"That'd be cool." He said. "But I'm not *that* great."

"Psh." Will scoffed and pushed at Mike's head. Mike reciprocated the action and stuck his tongue out.

"I'm starting to think that Holly's the most mature one here." El said, rolling her eyes. Holly grinned.

"What about me?" Hopper asked.

"What about you? You're in no way, shape or form mature half the time." He stuck his tongue out at her. "See? You're only proving my point."

## 16. Chapter 16

Here we find out a truth of Ted, Mike/Hopper chit chat, Mike says why he smokes and explains how he's related to a boy named Richie Tozier who has a best friend (possibly boyfriend but he's not sure) named Eddie Kaspbrak. Yeah, it's complicated ;)

You know the whole reason I wrote this Richie/Eddie thing in here is because I want them to be in the story because of Karen's OOC ass. It's just those two, not the rest of the Losers. I hadn't even planned this when I wrote the chapter where they went and saw the movie. I legit wing just about everything I write, I don't know HOW you guys like it but I love you guys soooo much!

And you know what? I winged the FUCK out of the ending, but you're VERY welcome! ;D

Next update: July 23

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Thursday, November 23, 2017

It's safe to say that for Mike, so far, it has been the worst Thanksgiving he's ever had. Not to say he didn't enjoy a lot of it, but there was one particular thing that made it worse.

See, everything was going *great*. Steve and Nancy arrived early this morning and Nancy hugged her siblings like her life depended on it. Joyce had made an amazing brunch for them all, and everyone helped out in the kitchen with dinner. Well, everyone except for Holly and El, who sat in the living room watching TV and giggling together, which had made Mike smile and Nancy question him.

Dinner was going okay, everyone had been talking and laughing, and asking Mike, El and Will about college and how they were doing. Hopper constantly made dad jokes that made El groan, and Nancy kept poking Mike in the side, whereas he, in return, would tickle her sides. Declaring that she was hot, Holly rolled up her sleeves to try

and cool her self off, and Mike's entire body stiffened when he saw her forearms.

"Holly." She looked at him and then looked where he was looking. She looked back at him. Neither said anything, but their silence brought attention to them.

"What's wrong?" Joyce asked.

"What happened, Holly?" Mike asked, quietly. She bit her lip and didn't say anything. Tears formed in her eyes.

"What is it, Mike?" Nancy asked.

"Bruises." He said, glancing at her. He grabbed Holly's hand and brought her arm up onto the table. Said bruises were shaped like finger prints, as if someone had grabbed her there, *hard*. They were big, too, way too big to be another kid.

"Dad didn't mean too, Mikey." Holly told him. "He's never hit me before. He just grabbed me a little too hard is all, I promise. It's okay."

"Holly, that's not okay." Mike shook his head.

"He shouldn't be grabbing you like that at all, kid." Hopper said. She shrugged. Mike sighed and ran a hand over his face.

"Sweetie, can I talk to you?" Joyce asked Holly, who nodded. She looked at El and Nancy and nodded towards the living room. The two stood up and followed Joyce and Holly. Mike sat back in his chair and stared at the table for a couple seconds, and then stood up.

"Mike, where are you going?" Will asked, making a move to get up.

"Outside." He mumbled and walked out.

"He's going to smoke, isn't he?" Steve asked, with a sigh. Will nodded.

"Yep."

"He smokes?" Hopper asked, eyebrow raised. "He doesn't seem like

someone who would." Will shrugged.

"I mean, he doesn't do it often. He quit for a couple months but a couple days after he and Dustin came back after break in September he started up again. It's mainly just when he's stressed or upset, and I'm pretty sure he's both right now." He told him.

"Yeah, I haven't seen him smoke much but when they were in high school he'd almost smoke a pack a day." Steve said. "Just imagine how much money he could have saved if he didn't smoke." Hopper rolled his eyes.

"Well, I'm gonna go join him, have a chat with him." Will nodded and Hopper stood, grabbing his coat, and Mike's, seeing as he'd forgotten his. He felt his pocket for his own cigarettes and walked outside. Mike was sitting on the porch, knees up to his chest, blowing smoke rings with his arms wrapped around himself. "You forgot this, kid." Mike flinched a little at the sound of his voice but looked up at him and gave him a small smile, putting the cigarette between his teeth and pulling on the coat.

"Thanks." He muttered. He nodded to him and sat next to him, lighting his own cigarette. "I didn't know you smoked?"

"I could say the same for you." Mike titled his head a little and nodded, taking a puff. "I've been trying to quit, though, and I'm doing pretty well. This is the first one today."

"Same. But that's good. I don't smoke much, just when I'm stressed or something." Mike shrugged.

"Why did you start smoking to begin with, if you don't mind me asking?" Mike didn't say anything for a couple seconds.

"My dad is an alcoholic." He said, finally. "And I drank once, when I was sixteen, and I've never touched it again. Trust me, I've wanted to, because it made me forget everything that stressed me out. AKA my shit father." He rolled his eyes, taking another puff of his cigarette. "I don't want to end up like him, because it's hereditary, you know? Alcoholism I mean. Max stole a couple cigarettes from her brother for us to try and I was the only one who actually stuck with it. Everyone

else didn't even finish half and the first night I smoked, I smoked like five. It made me not want to drink." He shrugged again and looked at Hopper. "Why'd you start smoking?"

"Peer pressure, believe it or not." He replied, flicking the ashes off his. "I was younger than you, though. I started at about thirteen." Mike raised an eyebrow. "I know, that was young, but everyone was doing it. I remember being seventeen and sharing cigarettes with Joyce under the bleachers, getting caught but continuing to do them. They just became a bad habit. I smoked and drank a lot when my daughter died, though."

"What?" Mike asked, confused.

"I had a little girl, Sarah. She got sick when she was younger and passed. My drinking split me and my ex-wife up. I'm assuming El didn't tell you about that?" Mike shook his head. "El's the reason I quit drinking all together. When she came into my life, I quit cold turkey."

"I'm sorry." Hopper just nodded and didn't say anything for a while.

"I know you're pissed at your dad right now for what he's done, and so am I, kid, and I'm gonna keep a eye out for her while you're gone." Mike looked at him and put his cigarette out.

"It took literally everything I had not to get in my truck and go over there and beat his ass."

"I know. I don't blame you for wanting to, but you've gotta understand that if the police get involved you'd be arrested for assault, never mind what he did to Holly. They'd overlook that."

"Fuck the police. No offence." Hopper snorted.

"In any other circumstance I would be. I know you want custody of her, you or Nancy. El told me." He explained, seeing the confused look on Mike's face. "I'm gonna be honest, I'd rather Nancy get custody of her." Mike raised an eyebrow at him. "I only say this because raising a kid is a lot of work, and you're still in school, it'd be even more stress on yourself, trust me, I know. I can get you a court

date and evidence if I need to, but I'm gonna need you to *not* worry about that, okay kid? I know it's all sudden and you can't help *but* worry, but you've got midterms that you have to pass next week and you don't need anymore added stress to it." Mike sighed.

"I know. But... Nancy getting custody of her means she would take her to New York with them." He said. Hopper bit his lip.

"Actually, a little birdie told me that they were thinking about moving back here. Maybe not to Hawkins specifically but... close."

"Who?"

"Steve." Mike snorted.

"Figures." He looked ahead of him. "I know Holly would be better off with Nancy, it's just hard." He rubbed his face with his hands and let out a groan. "God, I feel like I'm in a damn Lifetime movie or something, thinking about all this shit so quick." Hopper laughed at that.

"It kinda does, actually. I'm gonna head back in, I just wanted to talk to you. If you ever need anything, kid, just let me know, okay?" Mike nodded.

"Thanks, Hop." Hopper stood up.

"And don't think I don't see the way you look at my daughter. You'd better tell her soon." Mike blushed.

"Oh my God." He buried his face in his hands as Hopper laughed.

"Jeez, dad, what are you doing to embarrass him?" El asked, walking outside. Hopper just snorted and shrugged, walking back inside. El rolled her eyes and wrapped her blanket around her tighter and sat beside Mike. "You okay?" She asked. He looked at her and nodded.

"Yeah, we talked some. Your dad's cool. I said fuck the police and he wasn't offended by it." She giggled at that.

"I've said that multiple times so he shouldn't be by now." They sat in silence for a while, and she said, "I, uh, I'm sorry about the deal with

Holly. I never expected it." Mike sighed.

"I should've." He said quietly. She made a face. "He's grabbed me like that before, when I was younger. And he meant it, meaning he meant it with her too."

"Why didn't your mom do anything?" She asked, surprised.

"She doesn't care." He shrugged. "She never really has. She's a whore." Her eyes widened at that and her mouth dropped open. "Yeah, she makes it seem like our family is perfect, when in reality she's off fucking some other guy when dads at work. Pretty sure my dad isn't my dad."

"I...don't know what to say." She said, finally.

"It's okay. I didn't either when I found out. You remember my cousin Richie? The one who looks just like me?"

"I remember you mentioned him."

"Well, I'm pretty sure his dad is my biological one." He sighed and ran a hand through his hair. "Fucks her sisters husband. That really says a lot, huh?" She didn't say anything. "Speaking of Richie, you know what's weird?" She looked at him. "He has a best friend named Eddie Kaspbrak, just like in IT. My aunt married a Tozier too. Her name is coincidentally Maggie, and his parents were so obsessed with the book they named him Wentworth, and God, I feel bad or him."

"How in the fuck." She deadpanned.

"I'm not kidding either, it's fucking insane, but cool. I honestly just think their parents loved the book and mini-series so much that they changed their names and shit. Eddie's name isn't Edward, though, it's fucking Edwin and Richie makes fun of him for it most times. You'd think they were boyfriends considering how they act. And Richie's *in love* with Eddie. He told me so, the dramatic little fuck. God, I'm sorry for cussing so much, I want to punch something." She grabbed one of his hands, that had been fidgeting with a loose thread on his jeans, and squeezed lightly. She put her head on his shoulder.

"I'd say punch me but I'm a girl and if you ever hit me I'd rip your

dick off and feed it to you." She said. He snorted so hard he coughed. She giggled.

"Christ." He chuckled and shook his head.

"I'm sorry about all this, though, Mike." She said seriously. "You don't deserve parents like them. None of you do. *They* don't deserve you. They'll regret it one day, I can assure you that." He looked down at her. She looked back up at him, glancing at his lips.

"Thanks..." He whispered.

"For?" She asked softly.

"For being so amazing." He replied. He licked his lips. She looked at him for a second.

"You know what? Fuck it." She reached up and put her hands on his cheeks, pulling him down and pressing her lips to his. To say he was shocked was an understatement, but he couldn't help but smile as he kissed her back.

Well, for Mike, it turned out to be the *best* Thanksgiving he's ever had.

Of course, not counting his mentally and physically abusive father grabbing his little sister by the arm, but that would be taken care of, and he'd make sure none of them had to see him again.

---

I've done my research y'all, in this situation it would be called guardianship instead of custody but Mike doesn't know that yet. It could take up to four months for it to go through.

Also, they FUCKING KISSED OMG.

## 17. Chapter 17

Next update will be on: July 27

Those of you reading on AO3 too, I plan to update today but I'm nowhere near finished so no promises!

---

"It's about time!" Will exclaimed and Mike and El jumped apart, Mike literally falling off the porch. "Oh shit." He burst out laughing.

"Mike!" El exclaimed. Mike just buried his face in his arms. "You asshat!" She flipped Will off, who laughed as he walked back inside.

"This is fine." He said, muffled by his jacket sleeves. She laughed and grabbed his shoulder, attempting to pull him back onto his back.

"Jesus, you're heavy for a noodle, Noodle." She grunted. "He went back inside, come on." He finally rolled over and she sat up on her knees, putting her hands on her hips. "Considering the way you fell off the porch, I'd say that that wasn't a very good kiss, although I know you were smiling." He blushed but gave her a grin.

"No, that was a *great* kiss, but uh, I fell in the snow and er, look like I peed my pants so..." She looked down at his crotch and started giggling. He sat up on his elbows and looked at her.

"This is probably the best first kiss story ever, actually." She said, still giggling. He raised an eyebrow.

*Holy shit, holy shit, holy shit. What the fuck I can NOT believe that just happened. And she said first kiss. First kiss. Does that mean we're gonna kiss more? Oh my GOD she's kissing me again.*

"Okay lovebirds, let's come back in and finish eating before everything gets cold!" Steve yelled. They broke apart again and rolled their eyes.

"We'll talk later." She told him. He nodded and she stood up, holding a hand out to him. He took it and let her pull him up. They walked in, hand in hand, blushes on their face. Mike did let go though, and

knelt down to hug Holly.

"We're gonna get you out of there, okay, Hols? Dad won't bother you anymore, *at all*. I promise." She smiled and hugged his neck.

"I know. You're the best, Mikey." She grinned at him and he grinned back, deciding not to ask about the redness in her eyes. Nancy had them too so he figured they had a good talk too. He stood up and Will coughed.

"Did my sister kissing you scare you so bad you wet yourself?" He asked, an eyebrow raised. Mike rolled his eyes.

"No, you did."

"So you *did* pee on yourself?" Nancy asked, on the verge of laughter.

"You're twenty, Mikey, you shouldn't be peeing on yourself anymore." Holly told him, pointing a finger at him. Mike's jaw dropped and he looked down, having forgotten about that. El slapped a hand over her mouth at the look on his face. They all started laughing.

"No!" He exclaimed, whining a little. "I fell off the porch and into the snow." He grumbled, walking towards Jonathan's room to change pants. He heard them laughing the whole way there. They'd stopped by the time he came back but he was still pouting, his cheeks red.

"You people are so *rude*." He plopped down in his seat.

"At least you didn't fall on your butt in the mud?" Joyce offered.  
"That happened to El over the summer"-"

"No embarrassing stories, please and thank you, I embarrass myself enough as it is in front of him." El said, sticking her tongue out at her. Mike couldn't help but smile at her. She smiled back, her cheeks turning pink. Will smirked.

"I've said it once before, I'll say it again. I ship it."

---

(Mike & El)

(11:31 PM) El- Mike get off your phone and sleep

(11:32) Noodle- how'd you know I'm awake?

(11:33) El- facebook said you were, duh

(11:33) El- uh do you wanna talk?

(11:34) Noodle- texting or?

(11:35) El- no you can come to my room. the rooms are sound proof so no one can eavesdrop

(11:35) El- AKA Will and my dad

(11:36) Noodle- lmao omw

About a minute or so later, there was a soft knock on the door frame of El's room. She looked up from her spot on a giant bean bag and smiled at him, nodding for him to come in. He shut the door behind him. She stood up and plopped on her bed, patting the space in front of her. He scratched the back of his neck and sat Indian style in front of her.

"I'm, uh, this is probably gonna be the most awkward time you'll ever see me." She chuckled.

"Same." They stared at each other. "So, uh..."

"Um, okay, first off, I want to be completely honest." He told her. She raised an eyebrow. "You'll probably think I'm incredibly lame for this but uh, I've had a crush on you for the last two years." She tilted her head to the side.

"Really?"

"Yeah. Uh, I was too much of a wimp to go up and talk to you when I saw you at work. Er, I didn't know your name either so I was kinda internally flipping out when I found out it was you who was my roommate. Not like a bad flip out, but..." He shrugged.

"That's so cute." She said, grinning at him. He gave her a nervous smile. "I don't think it's lame at all. I didn't see you much, but I always thought you were cute when I did."

"Oh, uh, good, good. Thanks." He blushed. "God, that wasn't even the worst part." He muttered. She made a face. "So, you're probably gonna think I'm a total dick when I tell you this but me and Abigail weren't really...together?" He made a face. "Let me start from the beginning, jeez." He rolled his eyes at himself. "I honestly thought that Abigail was pretty and that I could maybe get over you with her, and I know that sounds bad but I wasn't doing it to hurt anyone, but myself really. So when I got her number I was happy. We went on a couple dates and all and I liked her, but not like that, you know?" She nodded. "Well, remember a couple weeks ago when I asked if I did something to make you mad?" She nodded again. "Well... when I went to get us drinks I heard Dustin telling Max about some...*plan* he had, that involved Abigail. She's bi, and has had a girlfriend for three years. That girl that we thought she was just friends with that day at Benny's was her."

"What the fuck?" El exclaimed. "Was that plan to hurt you?" She asked.

"No, at least, he didn't intend for it to. He wanted to... make you jealous because I was with another girl. I promise you, El, that I didn't know about it until that day I heard him talking to Max and Lucas. And the only reason I kept up with it was to see how long he'd actually go along with it too. She knew about it. The day before your birthday, when me and her kissed, I talked to her about it and we both agreed to just pretend in front of you guys. That's why she kissed me, she saw you guys. I know you'll probably hate me and all but I wasn't trying to hurt anyone and I'm still pissed at Dustin for doing it because it was wrong and I never wanted to make you jealous in the first place because I didn't think there was no way in hell you'd ever like me back and—" He broke off when El giggled. He took a deep breath and squeezed his eyes shut. He felt her moving around on the bed and figured she was about to get ready to kick him out, but then he felt her lips on his and he relaxed a little, kissing her back. She pulled away and he opened his eyes, seeing a soft smile on her face.

"I don't hate you, Mike." She told him. "I'm not mad at you, either. I'd probably have done the same thing. Dustin is a dick but I do understand that he was just trying to help you, but he shouldn't have

done it that way." Mike nodded in agreement. "Also, you need to work on your breathing when you babble like that." He blushed and looked down. "Uh uh, look at me." She put her finger on his chin and made him look at her. "Rest assured I plan to slap Dustin next time I see him, but I'm gonna be honest now, too. His plan worked." Mike eyebrows furrowed. "I was jealous as all hell. That's kinda why I distanced myself from you, I didn't wanna come off as a bitch and I didn't want Abigail to think anything was going on between us. And..." She blushed this time. "I uh, I heard you talking to everyone the other day." She said.

"Wait... when I confronted Dustin?" He asked, having forgotten about the other part of the conversation.

"Oh you confronted him?" She asked, tilting her head to the side. He nodded. "Oh. Well, no. I heard the end of it." She bit her lip. He furrowed his eyebrows, trying to remember. Then it dawned on him. He buried his face in his hands and let out a groan.

"Oh my God this is so embarrassing. I didn't want you to find out like that." He whined. She chuckled.

"I didn't want you to find out through Will either so I get where you're coming from." She grabbed his hands and made him look at her again, but held his hands in hers on her lap. "I am falling, though, Mike. Faster than I thought possible. With Bradley, I didn't know or think I loved him until a year after we started dating, and me and you aren't even dating. Well..." She bit her lip. "Uh, anyways, I'm a mess, Mike, and I need you to understand that. I'm pretty sure I'm in love with you too, and I don't know where we're going from here, but I want you to know that." He didn't say anything for a couple seconds, he just gently rubbed his thumbs over her knuckles.

"You know that I love you." He told her. "And I understand. You're a beautiful mess though, but I'm a mess too." She gave him a smile. "Where do you want to go from here?"

"Well, I... I know it's kind of sudden but, maybe... maybe be my boyfriend?" She asked nervously, biting her lip. She never thought she'd see a grin on his face as big as the one he had.

"Definitely." He said. "We're not doing anything tomorrow, right?" He asked. She shook her head.

"Nope." She said, popping the *P*. "I mean there might be some stuff like in the morning but that's it."

"Okay, well, um, do you wanna go on a date?" He asked, letting one of her hands go and scratching the back of his neck awkwardly. She snorted, covering her mouth and nose with her hand.

"You're so cute, Mike. So awkward asking me out when we're already boyfriend and girlfriend." She giggled and he blushed, smiling. "But yes, I would *love* to go on a date tomorrow."

## 18. Chapter 18

Mileven go on a breakfast date. Mike and Nancy talk.

My day has been MADE so here is an early chapter! The next one will be posted on the 28th though!

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**Friday, November 24, 2017**

**9 AM**

"Has anyone seen Mike?" Holly asked, walking in the kitchen, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes. Everyone shook their heads.

"Come to mention it, I haven't seen El either." Hopper said. "And she's usually up before everyone."

"I'll go check her room, they might be in there." Will said. They nodded and he made his way to her room. The door was cracked open slightly so he opened it a little more and peered inside, but no one was in there. There was a folded piece of paper on the bed though, so he continued in to be a nosy little shit. He picked it up and saw that on the front it said;

*To whoever finds it first, open and read to your hearts content 3*

He raised an eyebrow and went back in the kitchen, waving it in the air.

"I think they ran off to elope or something." He said, plopping in a seat at the table.

"What's elope?" Holly asked.

"It's a version of a wedding, kinda." Joyce told her.

"Oh. Really?" She asked hopefully, looking at Will, who chuckled and shook his head.

"I was only joking, Hols."

"Awe, I want them to get married." She pouted.

"Maybe one day." He said. He opened the note and read aloud, "Mike and I have decided to run away together and get waffles. We're going on an adventure and don't know when we'll be back, but probably by lunch. P.S. AKA a date! Don't tell anyone Will!" He laughed after reading it, and Hopper and Joyce snorted at her choice of words. "I hope she means not to tell Max, Lucas and Dustin."

"Probably, you know how Max'll react." Joyce chuckled.

"Yeah, she's gonna freak. She's been wanting them to get together since she first moved in."

---

Meanwhile, Mike and El were sitting across from each other at the Waffle House, sharing a plate of waffles.

"What's something I don't know about you?" Mike asked.

"Hm... I have curly hair." She said. He raised an eyebrow.

"You do?"

"Yep!"

"I've never seen you with your hair down. Why do you always wear it up?" She made a face.

"You haven't, have you? Hm..." She reached up and pulled the band out, letting it fall over her shoulders. "It's uh, it's pretty long and I kind of hate it, but I don't trust anyone to cut my hair. The last time I really let someone *cut* it, they shaved it all off." His eyes widened and she nodded. "Yeah, I had a legit buzz cut. I went and got it trimmed at the beginning of summer but the girl who did it fucked it up so it's all messed up back there." She ran her hands through it and it fell a little above her mid back.

"Wow." He stared at her hair. "It's so pretty." He seemed genuinely amazed by it. She blushed a little but smiled. "Nancy could cut it, you know." He said, looking at her, and then back to her hair. "She has her license for it and worked at a salon for a while before she moved

to New York."

"Really? You know, I'm pretty sure I knew that but it's just been at the back of my brain or something." He smiled. "Okay, my turn. What's something I don't know about you?"

"I hate bees." He said instantly. She raised an eyebrow and started giggling as a vine came to mind. "What?"

"The vine." She said. "My name's Michael with a *B*." She tried to make herself sound like the guy and he started laughing.

"Shit, I'd have finished it if you didn't make me laugh." She grinned. "But no, I honestly hate them so much like they *terrify* me. I don't know why. I *hate* their little buzz buzz shits." She snorted at that.

"Buzz buzz! Buzz buzz! I'ma fuckin' bee mother fucker I'm gon sting you-!" He snorted so hard he almost spit his drink out. He covered his mouth. She grinned and took her phone out, going to Snapchat and bringing the bee filter up. When he uncovered his mouth she took a picture of him as a bee and showed it to him.

"Get that shit outta here." He joked. She chuckled and titled the video; *Mike has become his greatest enemy*. She saved it and posted it, then put it on Instagram and tagged him. She set her phone down and grinned at him. "God, I haven't laughed that hard in a while."

"I'm glad that my weird ass was able to get you to laugh." He smiled at her. "Okay, wanna continue?" She asked. He nodded.

"What's something I don't know about you?" He repeated. She glanced around, pretending to be sneaky and whispered,

"I wear contacts." He made a face.

"Really?"

"Yep, sadly."

"Dude, how in the hell do I not know this?"

"Because I'm the best at hiding it." She said cheekily. "I have them

where my lady stuff is so no one will find them. Same with my glasses, but I haven't worn those in a while. I look like an idiot with them."

"I highly doubt that." He rolled his eyes. "You're cute already, you'll be cute with glasses too." She blushed but gave him a small smile.

"What's something I don't know about you?" She asked.

"I used to have braces."

"Really?"

"Yep, I used to have crooked ass teeth. And braces *suck* because I kept getting my lips caught on them because I used to bite the hell out of my lips."

"You still do." She pointed out.

"Well, more back then than I do now." He said. "I still wear my retainer every other night, that's why I sound like an idiot in the mornings when I talk." She snorted.

"I honestly thought your brain just hadn't started functioning right yet."

"Well that was part of it." He shrugged and she giggled. "If you pay close attention I have a tiny lisp. And God the spit." He shuddered and she snorted. "I hate it but I'd rather not look like an idiot."

"You wouldn't." She shook her head. "You'd look amazing with crooked teeth. Either way." She shrugged. He blushed and bit his lip. She smirked and took another bite out of the waffles. "These are so good but Eggos will always be the best."

"Honestly though." He agreed, taking a bite of his own.

A little while later, once they'd finished their waffles and their own hot chocolates respectively, they left in Mike's truck. Despite the town being small, there was a shit ton of traffic, thanks to it being Black Friday, so they were in the truck for a good thirty minutes before they could even get on the *right road* back to her house.

"Just imagine how bad it is in Chicago." El commented. "And in the stores," She shuttered at the though, "I feel bad for the ones working at Benny's, because *God* it's a nightmare." Mike chuckled.

"I bet. I remember one time, when I was a teenager, I went with my grandpa and Richie to Wal-mart and holy hell was it the worst day of my life. Okay, well, not really the *worst* day, but you know." He shrugged. She chuckled and nodded.

"Will I ever meet this Richie?"

"Probably." He shook his head a little, getting the hair out of his face. "He and his parents usually come down every other year but I think it'll just be him and Eddie this year. At least I hope so. He's wild too, he's the raunchiest sixteen year old you'll *ever* meet."

"And here I thought I already met Dustin." Mike snorted.

"I'll facetime him later today and you'll see what I mean. He's like a monkey and a frog had a baby and it smokes crack or something." She looked at him, making a face.

"That was pretty descriptive."

"It's pretty accurate, too, if I say so myself." She giggled. "Have you ever been to the quarry?" He asked. She shook her head.

"No, I know Will used to talk about it all the time but I never understood what was so great about it."

"Well, you wanna go? I mean, we have plenty of time to kill. It's a lot more than you think." He told her. She nodded and he turned down the next road. A few minutes later, they wound up at the top and her eyes were wide as she took it all in.

"Can we get out?" She asked.

"Yeah, just... don't stand too close to the edge. If you fall you'll die."

"Wow, so blunt." She said, kissing his cheek quickly before hopping out and walking closer. He chuckled to himself and got out, joining her. He didn't go very far from the truck, but she did, only being

about two or three feet from the edge. She looked back at him, eyebrow raised. "You're not coming closer?" She asked. He shook his head and stuck his hands in his pocket.

"I'm not exactly a fan of heights." He said. "I almost fell off there, one time."

"Really? How?" She walked back over to him.

"Troy." He explained. "He used to torment the hell out of us when we were younger."

"Hmf, I'm glad I broke his nose. Next time I'ma kick him in the balls." She walked past him and turned around, taking her phone out. "Turn around, I'm wanna take a picture of you." She said. He turned around and raised his eyebrows.

"Why?"

"Because you look *great* in this lighting." He grinned at her and she took the picture. She shivered a little and showed it to him.

"For a picture of me, it is pretty good." She scoffed and he chuckled. "C'mon, let's get in the truck. I'll turn the heat back on and we can sit in the back for a little while." She nodded and got in the back seat. Instead of getting out and getting back in through the door, he climbed over the seats, hardly able to get his long ass limbs over it. El giggled, glad that she'd had her camera on still and took a video of him.

"Having a hard time there, bud?" She asked. He looked at her and nodded.

"Not my best work, I'll give you that."

---

"Well, well, well, that didn't last long." Will said, arms crossed over his chest as Mike and El walked through the door, hand in hand. They glanced at each other, giggling. "Holly wants you two to get married already. I told her maybe in the future but she pouted." Mike snorted but both their cheeks were red at the fact.

"Mike!" Nancy yelled from the kitchen.

"Oh shit, she's here?" He mumbled as he and El made their way to the living room.

"You didn't see my car?" Nancy asked.

"Was a little preoccupied, Nance." He retorted. She rolled her eyes at him. She stood up from the table and gestured for him to follow her.

"I wanna talk to you for a minute, uh, privately. It's about the whole... thing from yesterday." Mike nodded and let go of El's hand, leaning down and kissing her cheek before following his sister to Jonathan's room. Joyce wiggled her eyebrows at her and El rolled her eyes, blushing again but smiling as she sat down.

Mike and Nancy sat across from each other on the bed, both sitting Indian style.

"Okay, first off, later today, Steve and I are going to the house to get more of Holly's clothes and stuff she needs for school so she can stay with us for a while. Is there anything that you might've left that you want?" She asked. He thought for a couple seconds.

"Um, grandpa's guitar is in the basement. I didn't get a chance to get it."

"That it?" He nodded. "Okay, I'll get it. They probably won't be home, so that's good. Second, last night, me, El, and Joyce talked to Holly about how she should be treated, being a girl, and what she should do if a boy, of any age, grabs her in any type of way. We basically gave her *that* talk." Mike nodded, biting his lip. "And three, Monday morning, Steve and I are going to call up some lawyers and go to the courthouse and try to find out what we can do to get custody of her. I know you want to get her, Mike, but it's not like you won't ever see her." Mike sighed.

"She's going to New York with you, Nance. I hardly ever see *you* and I actually got to see her every couple months. I went a year without seeing you this past year." Nancy sighed and looked at him. Just stared at him for a couple seconds.

"This was supposed to be a surprise but... we're moving." She said, finally. He furrowed his brows.

"Back here?" She shook her head.

"No, Steve's in the process of selling the house, and we're moving to Chicago to be closer to you. It was supposed to be your birthday present but..." She knew it was worth telling him with the way his face lit up.

"Seriously?"

"Yep! It might be an apartment to start with until we find a house but-

"You can just come stay at the house." Mike told her. "We can make room, like in the basement or something."

"I don't know." She bit her lip. "I don't want it to be crowded, you know? I know you guys are busy as shit most of the time." He shrugged.

"El works four days out of the week, she won't be there in the mornings, and Dustin and I have classes the same days, except Saturday. The other three have afternoon classes so we'll only be there to really sleep. Except on the weekends but you know." She chuckled.

"I'll talk to Steve about it. I know Holly would love to stay with you." Mike grinned. "But we are staying in his house until we get everything taken care of, since we can't just take her with us to Chicago, because of school. We'll have to transfer." Mike nodded in understanding. Before he could say anything else, there was a loud yelp from the living room.

"What the fu-frick, El!" Dustin exclaimed. Nancy and Mike looked at each other and Mike snickered, having an idea as to what happened. The two walked into the living room, where he, Max, and Lucas were with Hopper and Will. El looked their way when she heard them. She grinned at Mike and pointed at Dustin, who had a hand on his cheek.

"Told you I was gonna slap him next time I see him."

---

Okay so this story will eventually have smut in it, it won't be *too* graphic or anything, at least I don't plan for it to, but there will be a warning in the A/N and right before the actual scene. Just thought I'd let you guys know too because we've kinda already gone over this over on AO3 XD

## **19. Chapter 19**

I'm 17 rn so I'm still in high school so idk a damn thing about college courses XD so ik some of it isn't right.

Okay so if you guys are wondering, the main reason I'm adding a day or two to each update is so you guys'll eventually get used to weekly updates like on AO3. Did I explain that okay? If not just let me know!

**Next update- August 2nd**

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"Why exactly did you tell him that you were gonna slap me?" Dustin asked. Max was trying to keep her laughter in, Will and Hopper were grinning from ear to ear, and Lucas just looked confused.

"Because of your little plan." She said, shrugging. He made a face, and then looked at Mike.

"*That* plan?" He squeaked.

"Mm hm." Mike nodded.

"What was the result?" He asked immediately.

"You're a dick, for starters, just wanna clarify that." El said as Mike made his way over to them. He draped an arm around El's shoulder and she leaned into him.

"So rude." Dustin whined.

"They're gonna get married!" Holly shrieked from the other side of the house. Max raised an eyebrow.

"Did you tell her?" She stage-whispered.

"She kissed him and made him wet his pants." Hopper quipped.

"Um, no, that's *not* how that went, thank you very much." Mike pointed at Hopper who snickered. The other three just stared at the

two.

"We were outside talking, and I just said screw it- I really said fuck it," She whispered, "and kissed him. Will saw us and yelled and scared us, and Mike fell off the porch into the snow and it made his pants look like he peed himself."

"You always were a big ass scaredy-cat." Max shook her head. "So are you two like together or?" They nodded, grinning, and Max squealed -which was *very* unlike her- and tackled them so hard they almost fell over. She clung to Mike like a monkey but had her arms wrapped around them both.

"Jesus, Max." Mike grunted a little, holding her up. El giggled.

"I better be the maid of honor at your wedding." Mike groaned and dropped her. She let out a little huff and smacked him.

"If I had fell on my ass I'd have really made you piss yourself."

"Wouldn't be the first time." He muttered to himself, but El heard him and looked at him, eyes wide.

"Max made you pee yourself?" She asked. Max started cackling and Mike's cheeks turned a *bright* shade of red. Mike's phone started ringing before he could say anything else and he immediately answered, not even paying attention as to who it was.

"Hello?" He squeaked.

"Why do you sound like a pig sucked helium out of a balloon and got kicked in the nuts?"

"Goddamn it Richie, you know what, I'm gonna ignore that statement and thank you because that was perfect timing." Max laughed again and El giggled.

"You're welcome, couso- probable half-bro!" Mike snickered. "Why though?"

"Uh, no reason. Anyways, what you want." Mike put phone on speaker.

"Edwin, father and I will be coming down for our two week break! Mother dearest is too busy whoring around like her sister!" El made a face.

"What the hell." She deadpanned.

"Told you mom was a whore." Mike replied quietly.

"Who is that? Is that Carrot because it doesn't sound like her."

"No, Richie." Mike chuckled.

"Is it your girlfriend then?"

"Yes." El said for him.

"Shit! You go Mikey boy! Hello Mike's girlfriend, did you know that Mike sucked a bottle until he was-"

"Oop, gotta go Richie, bye!" He hung up as Richie laughed. He pouted. "Why is everyone telling embarrassing stories about me?"

"I have a few myself, you know." Joyce said, walking into the room, wiggling her eyebrows.

"Please don't." He begged. "I embarrass myself in front of her already."

"Like when you crawled into the back seat from the front and looked like you were gonna split in half?" She asked, grinning.

"Exactly!"

---

## Thursday, November 30, 2017

True to her word, Nancy and Steve were calling around and getting information, but Mike kind of already took care of it, as he'd sent Adriana their way. Well, not really, he just gave her Nancy's number and as far as he knew, they've been talking a good bit.

The group had *immediately* gone back to work, studying for their

midterms. Mike and Dustin probably had the worst of it, as they had three midterms, two on one day, one on another, and a three page essay due, *and* they both had to learn a song and make a video of them performing it and submit it by midnight on Friday, since that would be the last day before winter break, which would last all the way into January.

El had a midterm in every class, but she'd explained to them that they weren't very difficult, as she had algebra, physical science, economics and some English thing they could never remember the name of. All she had to do was study for the tests, and edit pictures. Max had calculus and computer science theory to do, and one two page essays on computer architecture. Lucas only had two tests this week too, but he had four labs. One every morning up until Friday and he was done. Will had two animation projects he had to do that would count as a test grade, and he was pretty happy with it, because he was done before everyone else.

"Mike! What song do you want to do?" Dustin whined, walking into the living room from the kitchen. Mike's face was buried in the cushions and he didn't respond. Max and El came downstairs together and Max raised her eyebrow at Dustin, who waved his hands dramatically at Mike.

"You think he's actually suffocated himself this time?" Max asked El.

"I hope not." She said. She crouched next to Mike's head and nudged him. He grunted. "He's fine. Mike, you good?" He mumbled something into the cushion. "What? You know I can't understand when you do that." He groaned and turned his head, keeping his eyes closed.

"I have a headache." He grumbled. "And I don't fucking care what song we do, Dustin. Just chose something we already *know*."

"But we're supposed to do one we don't know."

"It's not like he's gonna know!" Mike threw a pillow at him. Dustin huffed.

"Are you still pissed about the Abigail thing? Because I've said I'm

sorry a *million* times now, dude."

"No." Mike groaned, rolling onto his back. "I *just* said my head hurts. Leave me *alone*." He looked at Dustin, who stared at him expectantly. "Let's just do Imagine by John Lennon." Mike sighed.

"Really?" Dustin asked, excitedly.

"Yeah, I know the guitar version."

"Good, because we were originally supposed to use a different instrument anyways. I'll go get my laptop ready to record." He ran down to the basement and Mike sighed.

"You wanna come watch us? Make sure I don't like, kill him while I'm down there?" El snorted and nodded, getting up with him.

"I'm gonna go see if we have Tylenol or anything." He nodded and kissed her cheek, following Dustin. She came down with a cup of water and two pills as he was tuning his guitar. He gave her a smile and took them quickly, finishing the cup of water in two big gulps. "You fucking fish." She muttered. He snorted and grinned at her as she jumped onto a bean bag.

Mike and Dustin managed to do the song in only three takes, which Mike was thankful for, because as soon as they were done, he showered and passed out in his bed. It was only ten, when he usually went to bed in the twelve or one most nights.

"How much you wanna bet he's getting sick?" Max said, stealing a handful of popcorn from Will's bowl.

"Ugh, doesn't he always get sick as fuck around this time?" Lucas asked.

"It's usually when break starts and we're all back home." She said.

"He gets sick every year around this time?" El asked, making a face.

"Yeah, it's a constant thing, since he was little I think. He doesn't get sick much, just a few colds here and there but this one hits him *hard*. He's difficult to take care of most of the time, I don't know how his

mom did it." She shook her head. She frowned. "She won't be taking care of him anymore, that's for damn sure. The fucking bitch." She dug her hand in the popcorn aggressively.

"I can." El said, shrugging. "I mean, I *am* his girlfriend and roommate so..."

"I'll help too." Max told her. "Because you'll need it. He's a big ass baby when he's sick too." El chuckled.

"I just lay miserably in my bed when I get sick, 'cause I didn't want anyone helping me and shit."

"Mike'll wait on you hand and foot if you get sick." Will said. "It's just his nature, he does it for us too." El smiled. They talked for a few more minutes and El went to bed herself, slightly worried about him getting sick.

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**Friday, December 1, 2017**

**5PM**

"Wheres Mike?" El asked, walking inside after getting off work. She'd gone in later so she had to work a couple extra hours. "His truck isn't here."

"He went to the library. You just missed him."Dustin said.

"Why'd he go to the library? And he took his truck?"

"He had to do a little bit of research for his essay." Lucas explained. Then he shrugged. "He's probably just being a lazy ass." She rolled her eyes at that and nodded.

"Oh okay. I'm gonna go shower and start cooking soon."

"Ooh what are you cooking?" Will asked, grinning at her.

"Food." She replied, making her way upstairs.

"No really? I thought you were gonna cook my shoes!" El stopped and looked over the railing,

"Didn't that technically happen on Spongebob?"

"I think so." He snorted. She chuckled and went upstairs.

Two hours later, El had taken her shower and had already finished dinner, and Mike still wasn't back and he wasn't answering his texts.

"He's probably turned his phone off, Max, calm down." Lucas said as Max typed furiously on her phone.

"He doesn't do that, Lucas." She grumbled. "He puts it on vibrate when he's at the library."

"I'm gonna go check on him." El said, standing up. "Or at least see if he's still at the library." She slipped on her jacket. "Are you sure you'll be okay to walk there?" Will asked, furrowing his brows. She nodded.

"Yeah, it's only a couple blocks away. I'll text you when I get there." She said, putting her shoes on, grabbing her phone and walking out the door. It didn't take her but ten minutes to get there and she saw his truck in the parking lot. She texted Will and told him she was there and that he was too. She walked in and almost immediately, one of the workers walked up to her.

"Do you know a tall, dark haired boy with curly hair?" She asked. El nodded.

"That's my boyfriend." She told her.

"I think he's sick or something, because he worked for about an hour and then laid his head down and went to sleep. I see him in here a lot and he was really pale in comparison." El nodded.

"I think he is too, actually. I'll take care of him." The girl pointed to the section he was in and she thanked her before heading that way. He was the only one there, sitting at a table with his lap top on the table next to an open book, with his head down. She smiled a small smile and knelt next to him once she reached him. She tapped his shoulder a couple times. "Mike." She whispered. "Mikey, wake up." She poked him a little harder and he grunted and turned his head towards her. He opened his eyes slowly and blinked a couple times. She smiled at him. "Hey sleepy head, let's get you home." He sat up

and rubbed his eyes.

"Shit, I didn't mean to fall asleep. My head started hurting again." He mumbled as he started packing his stuff up. El closed the book and went and put it back in its spot, as she'd had to use it before once. She came back and he was standing, his bag over one shoulder. She stood in front of him and leaned up, kissing him on the cheek.

"Come on, you're going to eat and then go to bed as soon as we get home."

## **20. Chapter 20**

**Ahh! I'm sorry! My friend stayed over yesterday and I didn't realize the date! Jeez I'm the worst at updating on time XD.**

**Next update: August 9**

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He let out a small whine, "I have to edit my paper and send it in. And I'm not hungry."

"I'll help you, okay? And you need to eat a little something. Have you eaten today?" She asked. "Gimme your keys." He reached into his pocket and handed them to her. He nodded.

"This morning." She sighed quietly and patted his arm as he rounded the truck to the other side, getting in at the same time as her.

"Max wasn't kidding when she said it hits you hard, huh?"

"Huh?" He made a face. "Max?"

"She told me you were getting sick." She explained. He started grumbling to himself and leaned his head on the window. "Do you still have a headache?" He nodded slightly. "I'll get you something and I'll make you something to eat. I made spaghetti but I'll make you something else if you want."

"I don't want anything." He whined. She gave him a look and he sighed. "I'll just eat some 'sgehtti." She smiled. "But when I puke it up I blame you." She snorted loudly and he grinned a dopey little grin.

"When you puke, I'll hold your long ass hair back for you." He chuckled.

"Thanks in advance." He muttered and let out a loud sneeze. "Fuck."

"Bless you." He smiled at her in thanks.

When they got back to the house a few minutes later, Max was waiting with Tylenol, a cup of water and a thermometer.

"Dammit, Mike. Why do you *always* get the flu around this time?" She whined/asked. He glared at her.

"Not my fault." He sat in the middle of the couch and took the Tylenol from her, along with the cup. "And how do you know it's the flu?" He retorted. She put the thermometer in his mouth to shut him up and felt his forehead. It was warm, but not too bad.

"Okay, lemme play doctor for a minute." Max said, sitting beside him. El got in the other spot next to him and put her head on his shoulder. "Sore throat, you just feel like shit, and runny nose and sneezing?" Mike nodded. "No like, urge to puke or anything?"

"Not yet."

"You say that like you know."

"I *do* know, I say it every time, and every time I end up puking." El cringed a little at that but he didn't notice.

"Alright," Max sighed. "If I get sick because of you, I'm gonna kill you. I'll go call Lucas and tell him to get medicine on while he's at the store." Mike nodded and Max went back upstairs. "El, check the thermometer in about a minute." She called.

"You really do get the flu every year if she knows all the symptoms you get." El said, chuckling lightly. He shrugged. She took the thermometer out and squinted at it. "How the fuck do you read this thing." He snorted and took it from her. He looked at it couple seconds and said,

"98.4. Not necessarily a fever but getting there." He put it on the table and rubbed at his eyes again. "Why couldn't it have waited until like, we fucking got back home. I don't wanna sit in a car for three hours while I'm dying." She rolled her eyes at that.

"We can just wait until you're feeling better." She said. "Don't worry about it. I'm gonna go get you something to eat and a Gatorade if we have any." She patted his knee and stood up. He gave her a smile. She went in the kitchen while he unpacked everything he needed. He turned so he was leaning against the arm and stretched his legs out,

sighing and stretching completely, letting out a strangled grunt/scream. "What the hell was that?" El called.

"Mike's mating call!" Dustin yelled back, coming up the stairs from the basement. Mike flipped him off. El laughed and poked her head in the living room.

"Give this to him, please." El told him, tossing Dustin a Gatorade. He handed it to Mike, doing a weird stance so he wouldn't get close to him.

"Really?" Mike deadpanned, snatching the bottle from him. Dustin snickered and nodded.

"Yeah, really. I can't afford to get sick right now dude." Mike rolled his eyes and flipped him off again. "When and where?" Mike threw a pillow at him and knocked his hat off. Dustin giggled and went off upstairs. Mike huffed and grabbed his laptop and opened it. Max and Will joined him in the living room, sitting on the opposite side, as El came back from the kitchen with a bowl, fork and napkin.

"Fuck me!" Mike whined throwing his head back.

"Not while your sick, Mike." El retorted, putting the bowl on the table beside him. He blushed bright red as Max and Will cackled from their spot.

"Not what I meant." He muttered. "It didn't save my conclusion so I have to write it *again*."

"Here," El handed him the bowl and she took the laptop, sitting in the space between his legs and the back of the couch. "Eat and I'll edit. The you can write your conclusion, m'kay?" She said, not waiting for an answer.

"Don't baby him too much, he'll get used to it." Max said cheekily. Mike flipped her off.

"Cause he's a wittle baby!" El leaned over and poked his cheek and he rolled his eyes, trying not to smile. She grinned and started reading his essay. "You know, I don't know why you think you need to edit this, like, thoroughly, because the only mistakes are two words

together without a space or two letters in the wrong places." She told him. He gave her a small smile and shrugged. He finished the food a few minutes after she was done and set it on the coffee table, doing grabby hands at the computer. She chuckled and handed it to him.

"This conclusion is gonna be fucking four sentences, give or take a few. I don't even care." He muttered, typing away. They laughed. It ended up being eight sentences long, but they didn't have to know that. By the time he was done, Lucas had finally arrived with whatever he'd gone to the store for, and Mike some medicine. He tossed the bag to Mike and it landed in his crotch. "Ow, you fuck!" He threw a pillow his way but missed terribly, causing Lucas to giggle.

"I got you some of that Theraflu shit, cough medicine, some shit for nausea Max told me to get and nasal spray, which I know you *hate*."

"You hate me, don't you Lucas?" Mike accused.

"Just because I like watching you suffer doesn't mean I hate you." Lucas said, shrugging like it was obvious.

"Fuck you."

"Mike's a dick when he's sick, usually." Will told El.

"Just to you guys, because you love to fucking irritate me." He grumbled, picking at the plastic on one of the bottles. He gave up and just tore it off with his teeth. "Stupid plastic."

"You guys are insane." El chuckled, wiggling a little from her spot over Mike's legs. "I'm not bothering you sitting here, am I?" She asked. He shook his head, throwing back the small cup of medicine. He made a face and drank some Gatorade.

"Nah. You don't weight anything so you're fine." She snorted and nodded.

"Why are you guys so abusive to poor Mikey?" El asked childishly.

"Yeah!" Mike pouted, crossing his arms and glaring at them. Max snickered.

"He always gets us sick too."

"Not always. You didn't get sick last year." Mike stuck his tongue out at him.

"No but that weird freshman roommate of yours did." Will pointed out.

"Don't talk about *her*." Mike cringed. "God, something was seriously wrong in her head."

"I personally think she smoked crack or something." Lucas said.

"I don't know but ugh." He cringed again. El raised her eyebrows at him. "You don't wanna know." He told her. She chuckled and nodded. She stood up.

"Do you want to take a shower or anything?" El asked. He shook his head. "Okay, I'm gonna go take one so I don't have to in the morning." He nodded and she kissed the top of his head before giving the others a peace sign and heading up the stairs. Mike watched her go with a dopey ass grin on his face.

"Jeez, Wheeler, you're really in love, huh?" Max asked, grinning at him. He rolled his eyes and flipped her off... fondly.

"Yeah." He mumbled, biting his lip. He turned so he was sitting up right, his feet on the floor, and put his laptop back in his back and put it on the couch, throwing the medicine back in the grocery bag, along with the bottle of Gatorade, and stood up, picking up his bowl.

"I can take it, Mike." Will told him, going to stand up but Mike waved him off.

"I'm not so sick that I can't do anything, but thanks." He gave him a smile and went in the kitchen to clean his bowl out. He blew his nose before going back in the living room and grabbing his stuff. "I'ma go to bed, I'll see you guys tomorrow." He said, making his way up the stairs. He heard the three respond with *night* or in Max's case, *nightly nighty, Mikey!*

He didn't even bother turning on the light, he just half assed shut the

door behind him. El was still in the shower, obviously as she hadn't been up here ten minutes, so he opened the other boxes and took the medicine and then used the nasal spray, cussing Lucas out in his head the entire time. He dropped the few bottles on his desk and threw the bag in the small trashcan next to his bed, that hadn't been there before.

*Hm, I guess Max put it here for if I puke my guts up.*

He pulled back the covers and plopped down and stretched out, and decided to text Richie, knowing the little shit was awake.

**(Mike and Richie)**

(9:21) Mikey boy- Richard are you awake

(9:21) Dick- Michael it's not even 9:30

(9:21) Dick- yes im awake

(9:22) Mikey boy- dick

(9:23) Dick- that's my name don't wear it out

(9:23) Mikey boy- \*middle finger\* what are you doing

(9:23) Dick- just dropped my dear Edwin off at home and am now sitting in my car

(9:24) Dick- what are you doing, probable brother o' mine

(9:24) Mikey boy- dying

(9:24) Dick- flu?

(9:25) Mikey boy- the start of it

(9:25) Dick- ew. wanna facetime or smthn when i get home? i don't have hw cus i already did it

(9:26) Mikey boy- lmao yeah. lmk and be careful

(9:26) Dick- when am i not careful?

(9:26) Dick- nvm i just dropped my fucking phone in a cup of water

(9:27) Dick- glad i have the water proof case you got me for my bday on!

(9:27) Mikey boy- oml richie. go home XD

(9:28) Dick- lmao will do

(9:55) Dick- I am HOME and will facetime you in five minutes

(9:55) Mikey boy- lmao okay

Mike set his phone down and reached over, turning his lamp on, just as El came out of the bathroom. He looked over at her and saw that her hair was down, but it was straight.

"What?" She asked, setting her earrings on her dresser.

"Your hair." He said, lying back.

"Oh, yeah, I straightened it. That's why I was in there so long."

"I thought you were washing it or something." He shrugged.

"Nah, I washed it yesterday. It gets too dry if I wash it everyday." She tossed her phone on her bed and crawled next to him, leaning against the headboard too. "The meds help any yet?" She asked.

"Eh, I still feel like shit but my head's not hurting anymore."

"Good." She crossed her ankles and gave him a grin. He grinned back at her but jumped a little when his phone started going off. She raised an eyebrow as he picked it up.

"It's Richie." He explained. "He wanted to facetime so... you get to meet him." She grinned again as he answered, holding it up so Richie would be able to see both of them.

"MICHAEL!" Richie yelled, face close to the screen. All you could see was teeth, his grin so wide.

"Jesus, Dick, I'd rather not see your teeth the whole time." Mike said, snorting. El giggled. Richie held his phone a little further away and El's jaw dropped. Richie wiggled his eyebrows, looking at her.

"Like what you see?" He asked.

"You two are identical. What the *hell*?" She looked back and forth at them, and shook her head. "Jesus."

"I'm sure Mikey boy here told you, but we're pretty sure father o' mine is also Mikey's, so yeah. I look just like my dad."

"It's so weird." She muttered. She ran a hand through Mike's hair. "It looks so similar, too."

"If you think my hair's curly, wait til you see his in person. Lord." Mike shook his head, leaning into the touch a little.

"So I'm assuming this is the girlfriend?" Richie asked, raising an eyebrow. Mike rolled his eyes and nodded.

"I'm El." El said, smiling at him.

"Richie 'Trashmouth' Tozier, m'lady!" He said dramatically. She giggled. "So, Mikey, what happened to that little crush you had?" He asked. Mike blushed a little at that and El laughed. "What?"

"I'm the girl!" El sing-songed.

"Ooh, how did *that* happen?"

"You remember Will?" Mike asked.

"Little Willy? Yes! I love the lil fucker."

"You love Eddie more." Mike pointed out.

"Not the point." Richie blushed instantly.

"Will is my brother." El said. "Well, *technically* he's not, but we'll be step-siblings when my dad and mom get married."

"Mama J?" Richie asked. She nodded.

"Duh." Mike muttered. Richie flipped him off.

"So that's how you met or...?"

"Uh, kinda. I'd seen him at the place I work at sometimes and I always thought he was cute but we never talked. I was looking for a place to stay and Will told me that the house he lived in had space so Max like, interviewed me and I moved in the same day. I met Mike a couple days later."

"I swear, I almost died when I found out she was the girl from Benny's." Mike said, his cheeks red. "I told Dustin since he was at the house but he told Lucas, who told Max and Will about it."

"That dick."

"I know!" Mike exclaimed, making them laugh. "Then some drama with Dustin and a plan to make El jealous, which I guess I'll tell you when I see you, 'cause it's a lot." Richie snorted. "She kissed me on Thanksgiving and we talked and now we're together." El nodded in agreement.

"He wet his pants." El said, grinning cheekily. Richie busted out laughing and Mike's eyes widened.

"No I did *not*!"

## 21. Chapter 21

Next update: August 16

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Saturday, December 2, 2017

When El woke up the next morning, at nine thirty, Mike was sitting up in his bed, hunched over and looking miserable. She rubbed her eyes and sat up, throwing the blankets off her.

"Hey, you alright?" She asked. He looked over at her for a second, seemingly about to respond, when he promptly leaned over the other side of the bed and puked into the trash can. "Guess not." She scrambled over to his bed and actually held his hair back some, rubbing his back.

"Fuck." He croaked, spitting what was left in his mouth. He sat up and wiped his mouth with a tissue.

*Where'd that even come from?*

"Feel better?" He shook his head and leaned back.

"You're gonna... get sick," He said, voice still croaky, "being so close to me."

"I don't care." She shrugged. He gave her a look. "I don't! I'll be fine, Mike." She waved a hand. She sat back on her heels.

"I'm gonna get ready for work, think you'll be alright?" He nodded.

"Yeah, if I need anything I'll just... text Max or something." He grunted as he scooted back down into a lying down position. "Because I sure as hell ain't getting out of this bed unless I gotta pee." She chuckled and nodded, pulling his cover back over him and ruffling his hair.

He was asleep when she came back out, so she kissed his head and emptied the can, before putting it next to his bed. She put a cup of water on his nightstand and grabbed her things as quietly as she

could and went downstairs.

"Ah, just the girl I was looking for." Max grinned at her. "Was the trash can needed?" She asked. El nodded.

"Yeah, I woke up and he was sitting up, looking miserable and he puked."

"The poor turd. I'll keep checking on him today since I don't have anywhere to be. He's in good hands." El smiled.

"I know. I don't have the best experience with taking care of sick people."

"The only reason I do is because these fuckers get sick a lot, whether it be the flu or just a cold." El chuckled. "Considering he's a big baby, he'll want to cuddle and shit when you get home so be prepared for that." El grinned and nodded.

"Thanks for the heads up. I don't mind cuddling." Max snorted at that.

"I don't know how you people do it, man, it gets so *hot*." El shrugged.

"I'm usually cold as shit so." She grinned, and looked at her phone. "Okay, I better get going. If he gets like, really bad, call me. I'm gonna keep my phone on me."

"I doubt it'll get much worse than this, but I will."

"I don't know, this flu season is ruthless according to the news, and my dad." She added. "Uh, he said like three people in Hawkins have died from it already."

"Holy shit, well, I'm gonna go get some stuff and chill out on your bed if that's okay, make sure he doesn't croak." El flinched a little at that but gave a forced smile, nodding.

"Yeah, that's fine. I'll see you later."

"Have a good day!" Max yelled as she shut the door.

---

El had been checking on Mike a good bit, with Max, but it wasn't until about four thirty when Mike sent a text to the group chat.

### The Par-tayy

(4:31) Magic Mike- (video of idk wtf just happened)

(4:31) Magic Mike- my stomach when I eat something

(4:32) Willy Will- lmao more like your sanity when you're sick

(4:33) Magic Mike- Fuck you Will

(4:34) Eleven- whoa now, calm down children. It's not nice to cuss

(4:34) Magic Mike- ;p

(4:35) Stalker- mike what even the fuck

(4:36) Magic Mike- fuck off man im sick don't judge

(4:38) Dusty- we judge you when you're not sick why would we stop now

(4:45) Dusty- did he die

(4:46) Zoomer- no he just fell asleep

(4:46) Zoomer- (pic of Mike cuddled up next to Max)

(4:47) Eleven- omg i wish i wasn't at work

(4:48) Eleven- you think benny would be mad if i told him mike was sick and i needed to go to him

(4:49) Dusty- no benny's cool and all for true love

(4:50) Eleven- \*middle finger\*

(5:24) Eleven- I'M OTW HOME DONT' WAKE THE BABY UP

(5:25) Zoomer- even when you get here?

(5:25) Eleven- yes

(5:26) Zoomer- lmao okay

El arrived back at home about fifteen minutes later, and Max was

walking down the stairs as El started to go up.

"Oh, hey." El gave her a grin. "He still asleep?" Max nodded.

"Yeah, I'm gonna see if I can find anything for him to eat, that he won't throw up." El nodded.

"Toast." She told her. "At least, that would help me when I was sick."

"Gotcha, I'll make it and bring it up." El nodded again and continued up the stairs. She heard a laugh coming from their room and she made a face, and rolled her eyes with a smile at the sight before her, leaning on the door frame. Dustin and Lucas were on either side of Mike now, hugging him. He was squirming, trying to get away but was too weak to actually get anywhere.

"What happened to you two not wanting to get sick?" She asked, and all three jumped and Lucas let out a squeak, and Mike groaned.

"I hate you." He croaked, squirming again. "Get away." He whined.

"Okay first, get off him." She told them. "And second, didn't I tell you not to wake him up?" They scrambled off the bed and Mike stopped squirming, instead rolling onto the middle of the bed and stretching, letting out a tiny grunt, his cheeks red as fire.

"Sorry. And he woke up when Max got up so we wanted to take her place." Dustin said innocently. Lucas nodded in agreement, but looked at Mike.

"You might wanna go take a shower, dude, you fucking reek."

"You tink." Mike muttered, sitting up and running a hand through his hair, causing it to stick up wildly. Dustin snickered and Mike flipped him off.

"Tink?" Lucas asked. "Like Tinkerbell?" Mike threw a pillow at him.

"If I have to get up 'cause of you, I'ma beat your ass." He grumbled, getting up.

"Why are you getting up?" Lucas smirked.

"I've gotta fucking pee." He didn't necessarily slam the bathroom door, but it was enough to make the three jump.

"Mr. Grumpy Pants. Come on, let's go pack." Dustin pouted. El rolled her eyes and flicked them both on the back of the head. She shut the door behind them and went to fix Mike's sheets, since they were nearly sliding off the bed, but when she pulled back the blanket, there was a giant wet spot in the form of a body. She cringed a little and just pulled them off completely. He came back out and froze.

"What're you doing?" He asked.

"Your sheets are soaking wet with sweat." She explained. "And I'm sure your clothes are too. I think you should take a cool shower and change."

"But..." He gestured to the bed, pouting a little. She chuckled.

"You can get in my bed, Mike." She told him. "I know you don't feel like showering, but I'm sure it'd make you feel better. Then I'll lay with you, okay?" He sighed quietly and nodded. He walked past her to his dresser and got clean clothes. She dropped the sheets in a pile on the floor and held her arms out to him, and he hugged her, leaning down and burying his face in her hair.

"I'm sorry I'm being such a baby about this. I feel like shit and I'm usually sick when I'm at home and with my mom and... now I have to get used to her not fussing over me."

"I know." She said quietly, rubbing his back. "I'm sorry for the way she's acting. She doesn't deserve you as her son." He sniffed a little and nodded.

*Please don't start crying, please don't start crying. If you cry I'll cry and I've cried in front of you enough- holy shit thank God.*

Mike pulled a way from her, resting his forehead on hers for a second before stepping away.

"I'ma get you sick." He muttered.

"Michael." She scolded. "If you do, I don't care. I'm not gonna leave

you alone while you're sick. You're stuck with me for the next *month*."

He smiled.

"Hopefully a lot longer than *that*." He pointed out. She blushed and grinned cheekily, winking at him.

"Go get in the shower, mister. I'll have the bed all cozy for you, with some food you hopefully won't throw up." He grimaced at the mention of food, but nodded, making his way back into the bathroom. As soon as the door shut, she sighed and picked up the sheets and blanket, deciding to worry about his hundred pillows later, and took them downstairs. She put them in the hamper for the time being and went in the kitchen with Max, who wasn't making the toast yet. She looked up from her phone when she heard El huff and sit at the island.

"You okay?" She asked, tucking it in her pocket and leaning on her arms in front of her.

"No." El scoffed. "I wanna fucking punch his mom in the *face*."

"Same." Max sighed. "I still don't know what she said to him *exactly* but it wasn't just that she didn't want him home for Thanksgiving or Christmas. She said something to upset him as much as it did."

"Hopefully he'll tell you, because then we can go beat her ass." She grumbled. Max chuckled.

"If he tells either of us what it was, we'll let each other know and go to her as immediately." She held out a hand to El, who giggled and shook her hand. "She hasn't always been like that, you know." She said. El looked at her, an eyebrow raised. "She used to be like a mom to me. She wasn't fucking around with other men five years ago, she actually tried to be a mom to them. She drinks too, you see, but she drinks wine. She doesn't drink the cheap liquor shit Ted does, but either way it didn't help the situation. She slowly started drinking more and more as Ted stopped paying her any attention, and she started sneaking off when we were sixteen. Mike knew about it, but didn't tell us about it for a while. He didn't really care, he'd seen it coming."

"Wow."

"Yeah, that's not all though. They were all younger guys, too, the youngest being eighteen, 'cause ya know, laws and shit." El nodded. "As of right now, she's fucking around with my step-brother, Billy. The one I wish would go die in a hole, remember me talking about him?"

"Boy do I. I wanna stick my foot so far up his ass it'll get stuck." Max snorted and nodded in agreement.

"I think he's fucking with her head, royally. I think that's why she's acting the way she is. How much you wanna bet her and Ted will immediately agree to give custody to Nance?"

"I know they will." She scoffed. "God, why does most of us have such shitty parents or family members? You, with your step dad and Billy, Will with his dad, Mike and his parents. My parents were abusive when I lived with them, before Hopper."

"It's a fucked up world." Max shrugged. "But I know one thing." She put a hand over El's and she looked up. "We learned from our parents mistakes, and we will treat our children a hundred times better than they treated us."

## 22. Chapter 22

Mike has a bad dream, and tells El about it, which ends up him telling her about his last relationship and what he lost. Or WHO he lost, really.

I am officially an Aunt! Lila Rose was born with a head FULL of hair on August 10! She was 8 lbs and 3 oz. She and mom are doing good!

I'm behind on all my stories, as I didn't write anything for nearly a week, but I don't think you guys will have to worry about me being late with updating, for a while at least XD. I still have a couple more pre-written chapters for this, so... yeah XD. School also starts on the 28th of this month, and I'm gonna be working my ass off with it since it's online school and I'm determined to finish all 7 classes this year so I can graduate in May.

**Next update: August 23**

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"I'm sorry you feel so bad." El muttered to Mike as he cuddled into her side, his head resting on her shoulder. She pulled her blanket up to his shoulders. She and Max had managed to get him to eat two pieces of toast, and he's been able to keep it down so far.

"S'not your fault. It's a yearly thing." He sniffed, and groaned quietly when he realized he still couldn't breath out of his nose fully. "I'm a mouthbreather now, great." He grumbled. She giggled.

"You never realize how good you have it until you get a stuffy nose." He let out a small huff of laughter and nodded.

"Richie once asked me how he could unstuff his nose."

"I thought he was smart?" She joked.

"He is... sometimes. Book smarts, but not street smarts."

"Shouldn't that technically be book smarts though?" Mike didn't answer for a minute and let out what sounded like an attempted

snort. She laughed at that and he grimaced, before chuckling lowly.

"Ugh, that felt and sounded weird."

"It did." She agreed. He tilted his head back, where he could see her face. His cheeks were flushed red, his nose as well- he looked like Rudolph and she couldn't help but giggle a little at that- and his eyes were red rimmed, just slightly.

"What?" He asked. She reached up and brushed some hair out of his face.

"You just look cute." He made a face.

"I'm sick." She snorted.

"So? Still cute." His cheeks got noticeably darker but she didn't say anything, she just grinned. "You look like Rudolph, with your red nose."

"Thanks." He deadpanned, and coughed into his elbow for a second. She smiled sadly and ran a hand through his hair. He closed his eyes and sighed deeply when she scraped her nails lightly against his scalp. She smiled. Her eyes flickered to his lips, which were parted slightly so he could breathe, and she wanted to kiss him, thinking that she probably wouldn't get sick, but ultimately decided against it because she knew he'd complain about getting her sick. She knew she'd probably get sick when they were back in Hawkins, but she didn't really care. Other than the urge to kiss him, she noticed how dry they were, and furrowed her brows.

"Mike, do you own chapstick?"

"What's chapstick?" He muttered sleepily. She giggled and reached over to her night stand and grabbed the small thing of Carmex and opening it, putting a good bit on her finger and gently putting it on his lips. He scrunched his nose at the feeling, but didn't say anything.

"Rub your lips together real quick." She told him and he did, opening his eyes.

"Thanks." He whispered. She gave him a smile and kissed his

forehead.

"I'm gonna text dad and let him know the deal and then I'll play with your hair, 'kay?" She asked and he nodded.

"Your hair is pretty." He mumbled, closing his eyes and moving his head a little, to where her chin could rest on the top of his head if she wanted. "You're pretty. So pretty. Beautiful." She smiled and could feel her cheeks heat up, and was sure he could feel and hear her heartbeat speed up. He wrapped one arm around her stomach, fisting the back of her shirt.

"So are you." She told him, honestly. He made an affronted noise and she laughed. "It's true! You're pretty, beautiful for a guy. Still handsome either way, *but* I think those two words suit you better, to me." A rumbling noise came from him, and she realized he was humming. She smiled and brushed hair out of his face again, before grabbing her phone and texting her dad. Mike ended up falling asleep, thankfully, a few minutes after she started playing with his hair, and she followed soon after, despite it being so early.

They were woken up by Max at nine thirty, when she brought them both dinner and Mike his medicine. She'd eaten with them, and told them that they would wake them up in the morning before they left, wished them goodnight, and took the dishes back downstairs. El took a quick shower and changed into a pair of shorts and a tank top before joining Mike again, this time, her head was on his shoulder- as he'd been sprawled out like a starfish and she didn't have anywhere else to go- with an arm draped over his chest, and the two went back to sleep.

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### **Friday, December 8, 2017**

The next couple days got a little easier for the both of them, Mike stopped throwing up everything he ate- excluding toast or crackers- on Monday, and was feeling better, other than his entire body aching at some point or another, but that's what medicine was for, and he told El that he'd feel up to leaving on Thursday, but she decided to wait until Friday, just in case. They'd gone to be earlier than they usually would Thursday night, the two deciding to share Mike's bed -

since it was bigger- from now on.

El woke up at around four thirty that morning, seemingly for no reason. She was on one side of the bed and Mike was on the other, the two having separated sometime during the night. She turned over so she was facing him, expecting him to still be asleep, but he was sitting up, hugging his knees. His face was buried in his arms and he was trembling. Her eyes widened and she sat up quickly, crawling over to him.

"Hey, hey, what's wrong?" She asked softly, gently placing her hand on his shoulder. He just shook his head and sniffed.

"Sorry... I d-didn't mean t-to wake you up." He stuttered.

"No, it's fine, Mike. Did you have a bad dream?" She asked. He didn't say or do anything for a couple seconds, and then nodded.

"More like a memory." He whispered. He lifted his head and wiped at his eyes.

"Do you want to talk about it? You don't have to." She said the last part quickly, because he tensed when she asked. He let out a breath and nodded.

"I... I probably should have told you about this before now but... I try not to think about it, and I usually don't. I forget that it ever happened, sometimes. You told me about Bradley... I should tell you about Raven." He glanced at her and she nodded. "We started dating in the middle of our sophomore year. We were together for a year and a half, give or take a few months. I... I loved her. I thought I was going to marry her and-and she was... she got... I was gonna be a dad." The tears started flowing down his face and took a deep breath, trying to calm himself. He faintly heard El gasp, and felt her arm wrap around his shoulders. "We found out in November that she was pregnant, a little over a month. February third, twenty fourteen, she was driving to my house and she got in an accident. A drunk driver hit her. She lost the baby and... it was my fault." He covered his face with both hands, "If I hadn't asked her to come over that day..."

"Mike no..." El shook her head, though she knew he couldn't see her.

"It wasn't your fault, okay? I... It would have probably happened either way, that's how it works. You weren't the one driving... You didn't ask for it to happen."

"She blamed me, El." He choked out. "She blamed me for asking her to come over. She blamed me for getting her pregnant and loving the baby and making her lose him." He started sobbing and she couldn't help the tears that rolled down her own cheeks as she pulled him close, hugging him tightly. "I saw i-it h-ha-happen, in the d-dream." He stuttered.

"I'm so sorry." She whispered, running a hand through his hair. "I'm so sorry... It wasn't your fault, you couldn't have stopped it. I know you would have if you'd known what would happen." He wasn't able to say anything for a few minutes, but she continued running her hand through his hair and rubbing his back as he cried into her shoulder. "I'm sorry I... I don't know what to say. I'm not good with words like you." He let out a quiet chuckle at that, after he'd calmed down and shook his head.

"It's not your fault. And... you just being here helps. Sorry you had to deal with me like this though..."

"Don't apologize for that." She scolded, squeezing him a little tighter. "Everyone needs to cry sometimes, and it seems to me like you really needed it." He nodded and pulled away, wiping his eyes and sitting Indian style. She wiped her own eyes quickly and looked at him. She felt so bad for him, no one deserves that kind of thing. He would have been a *dad*. She bit her lip, giving him a half smile when he took one of her hands in his. He wasn't looking at her, instead at their hands, and she couldn't help but stare at *him*. "I love you." She said quietly. She hadn't *actually* told him, other than when she said she was pretty sure she was in love with him too.

The smile on his face could have brightened up the entire house.

## 23. Chapter 23

Okay so I'm looking for a BUNCH of OC's for a story I'm working on over on my other account, BCI603 (on here as well as A03). It's going to be a Stranger Things/The 100 crossover and I'll be needing a lot of OC's. If you want to be one, all you have to do is either review the following or PM me! Or you can email me at milevenreddiesfanfic (gmail)!

All I really need is this:

*Name*

*Age*

*Gender*

*Hair color/length*

But if you've seen The 100, let me know and we can talk which character you want to be! I already have a good bit planned out with who'll be which characters, but there are PLENTY more to choose from!

Your character will most likely die in some way because that's just what happens in The 100, a lot of people die, but your characters will still have a pretty good part in the story.

**Next Update: August 30**

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**Hawkins**

**3 PM**

"Looks like Michael here has finally come back from the dead." Steve said, smirking as Mike and El walked into the Byers/Hopper house.

"Shut... your face." He put a hand over Steve's face as he passed him and Steve snorted.

"Mom! Dad!" El shrieked. "We're home! Wait, dad's at work, shit."

Mike snickered. Nancy and Joyce came into the living room from the kitchen, wearing matching grins as they hugged the two. Jonathan, Will and Holly followed soon after.

"Mike, you look like shit." Nancy said brightly, pulling away from him.

"Thanks." He deadpanned. "I haven't felt like shit at all this week, so I'm not sure why I look it." She laughed, reaching up and ruffling his hair.

"But really, you look tired. Did you get enough sleep this week?" He nodded.

"He took like five naps a day." El said, holding her arms out for a hug from Nancy. She chuckled and hugged her back as Joyce pulled Mike in tightly. "Which, to me, would be a major accomplishment."

"How are you feeling, Sweetie? Do you still feel sick? I can make you something to eat if you want!"

"No, no, I'm fine." He said, smiling at her. "Thank you though. El took good care of me." El smiled at him. "Holly doll! Looks like you got a little taller in the last two weeks." He said, crouching in front of her. She stuck her tongue out.

"It's not my fault you're a daddy long legs who is as tall as me when he's *crouching*." She sassed. He snorted and held his arms out, and she hugged him.

"Ready to geek out for the next three weeks with me?"

"Heck yeah!" She exclaimed, letting him go so she could hug El.

"Jesus, no one's gonna hug me?" Jonathan asked, pouting. Mike rolled his eyes and stood up, knees cracking, and hugged him.

"Michael!" El squeaked.

"Eleven!" He squeaked right back and she gave him the stink eye. He winked at her and she chuckled.

"Ew, quit undressing each other with your eyes. There are children present." Steve said, making a face at them.

"There's only one child here." Mike corrected.

"I'm talking about you too, Wheeler. You're a child in my book until you're twenty one. And you still have a couple weeks."

"Oh, what a joyous time that'll be, too, eh?" He replied sarcastically. Steve chuckled. "And I'm not saying I'm not glad to see you guys but like, don't you have your own house?" Nancy snorted.

"Yeah, but we figured you two would come here instead of there so we decided to just come over." She told him.

"Uh huh." He gave her a look. "Are you sure that's all it is?"

"Um, I think so?" She shrugged. "Everything's going good so far, with the custody/guardianship thing. They're both willing to sign." Mike scoffed.

"Good. Fucking dickheads." She nodded and patted him on the shoulder before following Joyce and Holly back into the kitchen, where they were making sugar cookies.

"Walk with me, Wheeler." Steve said, throwing an arm around his shoulders and leading him towards the front door. Mike looked back at the other three.

"Help." He mouthed.

"No." El mouthed back and grinned at him. He stuck his tongue out at her and let out a sigh as Steve opened the door and they walked back into the cold air.

"Dude, I'm still not feeling a hundred percent. I don't feel like being out here." He whined.

"It's only gonna take a minute, calm your tits."

"Okay, Dustin." Steve flipped him off.

"I wanted to ask you for permission to marry your sister." He said, without missing a beat. Mike stared at him for a second.

"What?"

"I wanted to ask you for-"

"No, I heard you. Holy shit, I mean, I figured you were already gonna get married."

"I haven't even proposed yet. Or got permission." He raised an eyebrow at him.

"Hell yeah, dude. You can marry the hell out of her as long as you treat her right. I might be a baby giraffe but I've got a mean right hook." Steve snorted and nodded.

"Good, good. I'd never hurt her, you know that. And trust me, I know. I've seen it in action." Mike snickered.

"When are you gonna propose to her?"

"Christmas. Cheesy, I know, but I've heard her mention it to Barb."

"Good, you *listen*. Jesus, when we were kids she would freak the fuck out to mom about how cute it would be." He shook his head. Steve chuckled at then, but then frowned slightly.

"Uh, how're you doing? With... everything?" Mike sighed.

"Good as I can get, I guess." He shrugged. "It shouldn't have surprised me, all this bull shit with my parents. I'm just glad everything's going good in that sense." Steve nodded. "And uh, thank you, for going along with Nancy. To get custody of Holly, you know?"

"Of course, Mike, I love Holly. Hell, I love *you* and the rest of your little, well, not so little seeing as you're taller than me now, nerd friends. You're like the little brothers and sisters I never asked for." Mike snorted, rolling his eyes.

"Yeah yeah, I love you too, Harrington. So, can I see the ring?"

Inside, Nancy, El and Will were in El's room, talking.

"How're things with you and Mike?" Nancy asked, nudging her.

"He hasn't let me kiss him in a week." She pouted. Will rolled his eyes.

"Would you rather get sick?" He asked.

"Duh. Otherwise I wouldn't be pouting." Nancy chuckled, shaking her head at them.

"But everything's going well in general, I take it?" She asked. El nodded.

"Yeah. He loves me, and I love him." Will raised an eyebrow. She sighed and looked at Nancy, who was confused. "Falling in love with him is one of the hardest things I've ever done." Nancy made a face. "And I don't mean it in a bad way. He's not hard to fall in love with, he's *amazing*. It's because of the whole Bradley situation." Nancy nodded, having had many talks with El over the years about it. They were closer than anyone else thought. El bit her lip. "He told me about Raven." Will let out a small gasp and Nancy made a sound that was scarily close to a growl.

"God, I hate that bitch." She hissed.

"Yeah." El nodded. "He... he had a bad dream last night, and he was crying. I woke up, and I guess I'd heard him? I'm not sure, but he told me about it. I cried with him. I think we're sort of... on the same page? Like, we've both been heart broken, him *twice* at one time, so we understand each other better."

"I can't believe he told you." Nancy almost whispered. "He hasn't said a *word* to any of us about it since it happened."

"I don't know how he was able to function at school." Will said. "He smoked a pack a day back then, and he'd be irritable as all hell and snap at everyone until he got a cigarette." El bit her lip.

"He uh, he also said that it was a drunk driver?" The two nodded. "Is that why he won't drink?" They nodded again.

"He says he'd never drive while drunk, and I believe him but... he just doesn't like the idea of it."

"I don't blame him, honestly. I'd feel the same way, I think, if I were in his shoes."

They continued on their conversation, until Mike and Steve came back in, Mike whining about the cold and how he was sick and that it was *neglect* for them to let him stay out there so long. El just rolled her eyes, shooed everyone else out of the room and made him take a nap while she edited her pictures. Soon though, her eyes were starting to bother her so she got up off the bed to change them.

"You've gotta be *fucking* kidding me." El groaned as she dug through her bag. Mike grunted and looked back at her from where he was laying on his stomach.

"What?" He asked sleepily.

"I can't find my contacts." She huffed. "I swear I put them in here."

"Do you have your glasses?" He asked. She scrunched her nose and nodded, sighing.

"I do. I have a pair here and back at the house, just in case. Guess that was smart on my part." She grumbled, going over to her night stand and taking a pair of black rimmed glasses out. "I don't wanna put them on." She whined.

"Why?"

"I look stupid with them on."

"Nah." He shook his head, rolling onto his back. She raised an eyebrow at him. He raised his back at her. "El," He let out a quiet laugh, "You'd look beautiful with a potato sack dress on, never mind the glasses." She blushed a bright red and he grinned. She sighed.

"Fine..." She went to the bathroom and came back a minute later, but without the glasses. They were still in her hand. She squinted at him, but he was still blurry.

"You look like you're looking at the sun. I mean, I know I'm very bright because I'm so pale but... No need to stare." She giggled at that. "C'mere." He patted the space next to him and she made her way to him, plopping down and putting the glasses in his outstretched hand. He opened them and put them on for a second, and the face he made made her laugh. "Jeez, you are blind. Here." He put them on for her, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear in the process. He grinned widely. "See, beautiful." Her cheeks had yet to go from red to their normal color, so she was positive they were even brighter.

"You look better with the glasses." Is what she replied with. He snorted.

"I'd hope so. If not, I'd be pretty offended."

## **24. Chapter 24**

I am so so so so sorry for not updating guys! Thank you to the guest who reviewed and reminded me! It's been a mess here at home, school just started back for me last week and there's been a lot of bs between my parents that I haven't thought to update. Again, I'm SO sorry and because I was late I'll be *early* with the next update!

**Next update: September 7**

**P.S. that's also a day before my birthday XD.**

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**Saturday, December 9, 2017**

Mike had stayed the night with El, but the next morning he drove over to Steve's house, where he'd most likely be staying the rest of break. Upon arrival, he saw that the Christmas tree had yet to be decorated. He also noticed-barely- the small blonde running up to him, about to pounce.

"Mikey!" She shrieked. He snorted and leaned down to hug her. "I made them wait until you were here to decorate the tree." He saw movement out of the corner of his eye and saw Nancy making her way towards them. She smiled at him and nodded.

"I kinda wanted to wait too. It's tradition for the three of us to decorate it together." She told him. He grinned and hugged her too.

"Thanks, Nance, Hols. It really means a lot." He told them, honestly. They smiled at him, and Nancy pushed him up the stairs and showed him the room he'd be staying in.

"There was a twin sized bed in here that was for guests but we've made this *your* room for you to stay in, until we make the move to Chicago." She explained to him. "So consider this big ass bed one of your Christmas presents that you get to take with you to the house after we sell this place." She winked at him and he rolled his eyes, but thanked her.

"A king sized though? Really?"

"If you haven't noticed, Mike, you're fucking huge and would probably take up three fourth's of the bed when you *starfish*. Poor El wouldn't have any space to sleep." He huffed.

"I don't have any space when we sleep in the same bed." He said, sticking his tongue out at her. "The girl is tiny but damn she's strong, even when she's asleep. Nearly pushes me off the bed sometimes."

"So you two have slept together then?" She asked.

"N-no! Not like t-that!" He stuttered, glaring at her. She raised her eyebrows.

"I didn't mean *like that*. What are you? Twelve?" He scowled at her.

"Shut up. But yeah, we've slept- in the same bed- together." He told her.

"When did that happen? You two have only been together for what, two weeks now?" He nodded.

"The first night I was sick. Like *really* sick, throwing up and shit. She got off work early and made me take a shower and lay in her bed because my sheets were gross and sweaty." She chuckled.

"Sounds like here. You wanna unpack now or go ahead and decorate the tree?"

"The latter." He said, grinning at her. She rolled her eyes.

"You and your fancy words."

"That's not even fancy, Nance. Compared to other shit I've written." She rolled her eyes and shut the door behind her, following him down the hallway.

"I wouldn't know, considering I've never read anything you've written. And you've let El, apparently!"

"If I ever get anything published- officially- you can read it. How's

that sound?" She rolled her eyes *again*.

"Whatever you say, little brother." She said.

"I'm not even little anymore!" He grumbled. "Like I'm a whole foot taller than you now."

"Still younger than me." She retorted.

"Speaking of younger brothers," Steve said, meeting them in the doorway of the kitchen. "Little Trashmouth, is he really you guys half brother?" He asked. Nancy made a face at him, silently telling him to shut up.

"Nance?" Mike asked, having noticed the face.

"Uh, we'll talk about that later, when Holly isn't around to hear it, okay?" She said. Mike raised an eyebrow, about to try and talk her into it, but said little girl called him into the kitchen for whatever reason, and he had to drop it for the time being. He left to the kitchen and Nancy smacked Steve on the shoulder. "Did you really think *now* was a good time to bring that up?" She hissed. "Honestly, Steve."

"I'm sorry! I figured he knew about it!"

"No! He doesn't, I didn't plan on telling him until Richie and Went got here, so Went could tell him."

"Don't you think it's a little unfair, though? He's the only one who doesn't know. Even Holly does."

"He's on the right track." She said. "Mike isn't stupid, he knows something's up. Now, *don't* mention it again. If he asks, I'll come up with something. Don't tell him anything, okay? Please?"

"I won't. Promise." He grinned at her and she rolled her eyes, kissing him on the cheek before joining her younger siblings.

"Okay, why exactly are we in the kitchen?" She asked, hands on her hips. Mike looked at her and shrugged.

"I don't know."

"I don't know either." Holly said. "I was gonna get something but I don't remember what it was." Mike snorted.

"Me."

"You're tall as shit, Wheeler, come help me get stuff out of the attic." Steve said, motioning for him to follow. Mike made a face.

"What's that gotta do with anything? There are literally stairs going up there." He made a face.

"Just come on." He grumbled walking away. Mike rolled his eyes but followed him. They got a couple boxes of decorations into the living room when Steve said, "So uh, I'm gonna need you to break it to Nance that we have no working Christmas lights." Mike stared at him for a second.

"The fact that you're afraid of my sister amazes me." He said, finally.

"You don't *even* know, dude."

"Pretty sure I do? I lived in the same house as her for like fourteen years!"

"Okay, yeah, you have a point but you're her brother. I'm her boyfriend- hopefully soon to be fiancée- and she has for *sure* treated us differently." Mike rolled his eyes. *So dramatic.*

"Fine, I'll tell her. Or, I can just grab Hols and take her with me to get some and do some Christmas shopping? That way she won't necessarily know you don't have any." *No like it'd be that big a deal, anyways.*

"Okay, okay, cool. Yeah, do that. We won't have to deal with the wrath of your older sister now." Mike rolled his eyes again and grabbed the last box of ornaments, taking it into the living room.

"Hey Hols, you wanna go to the mall and Wal-mart with me?" He asked, putting it next to the other boxes. She and Nancy both eyed him.

"Why?" Holly asked.

"Why not?" He retorted. "You don't *have* to go. I just figured, you know?" He pouted a little and Nancy rolled her eyes.

"I want to go!" She said defensively. "I just wanted to know why." She mumbled.

"That's for me to know, and you to find out when we get there." He said, grinning at her. He gave her a knowing look, which she didn't get, and said, "Go get ready and we'll go in a few minutes."

## 25. Chapter 25

**Sorry I didn't post this yesterday! My mom had to work today so she wanted to celebrate my birthday yesterday, so I never got a chance to post! Hope you guys like it!**

**Next update: September 15**

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"Why did you all of a sudden want me to come shopping with you?" Holly asked, as she buckled her seat belt.

"Well, the main reason is because I want to spend time with you, you know, one on one?" She nodded. "Plus, I need some help Christmas shopping, and we need to buy some Christmas lights. Steve doesn't have any." Holly snorted.

"Of course he doesn't." She rolled her eyes. "Can I get some earbuds while we're there?"

"Yeah."

"Awesome, I need some." He snorted.

"I honestly need some headphones too, so." He shrugged.

"Why do most guys I know like headphones? They're big and bulky and would ruin my hair." Mike held in a laugh.

"A lot of guys don't care about their hair, Hols. I don't, but everyone knows that."

"I bet you could put your hair in a ponytail now." Mike eyed her.

"Why would I do that?"

"It's better than always wearing it down. It looks hot, Mike." She said, as if it was obvious. "Your hair is really thick and I know you don't wanna cut it, so ponytails are easier. And better." He chuckled.

"Okay, you can experiment with my hair later, alright?" She grinned

and nodded.

The two went to Wal-Mart first and got some Christmas lights and earbuds for Holly, headphones for Mike, and then went to the mall.

"I want to buy something special for Nancy and Steve." Holly said.

"You do?" He asked, curious. She nodded.

"You know, for taking care of me?" He nodded. "I want to do something for them."

"Do you have anything in mind?" He asked. She shook her head. "If I tell you a secret, will you promise not to tell *anyone*? Not even your best friend." She nodded excitedly and he leaned down to whisper in her ear.

"No way!" She shrieked, and then slapped a hand over her mouth.  
"He's really proposing?" She whispered. He nodded.

"He asked me for permission yesterday."

"He asked you?" She made a face and he rolled his eyes.

"Yeah. Anyways, maybe we could buy and decorate a scrapbook for them? I can ask around for pictures and stuff. I'm sure Jonathan and El have tones of them over the years." Holly gasped a little and nodded.

"Yes! Why are your ideas always so good?" She asked. He shrugged.

"Not *all* of them are." She scoffed.

"I've never heard an idea of yours that wasn't."

"Ice skating last year."

"Point taken."

---

The two had been in and out of at least eight stores when they're time together went sour- though only for a minute or two. They were

leaving Sephora- Holly having dragged him inside so he could buy Nancy a gift- when they walked by Karen and Billy, of all people. Karen stared at them as they walked by, and the two stared back, and Mike shook his head when he faced forward, scoffing and muttering under his breath. Billy hadn't paid them any attention, talking on the phone.

"Whore." Holly muttered.

"Whore." Mike grumbled at the same time, and they looked at each other before laughing. "Do you wanna get a milkshake?"

"In winter?" She asked, lips witching upward. He grinned.

"Duh."

"Of course I do." He nodded and she skipped beside him as they made their way out to his truck, but the fact that his *mother* didn't speak or even smile at neither of them stayed in the back of Mike's mind the whole time.

"Cookout good?" He asked as they drove down the road. She nodded and turned the radio up, dancing in her seat. He smiled and sang along.

"What kind do you want?" He asked as they walked in.

"The Oreo mint thing." She said. "And can I get fries?" She asked. He snorted and nodded.

"Go find us a seat and I'll be right there." She nodded and went over to a booth at the back and sat down. Mike joined her a few minutes later with the shakes in hand, a straw and a spoon. She raised her eyebrows at him when he took the top off of his and started eating it like ice cream, while she used the straw.

"Mike, what even are you doing?" A voice asked. Mike looked up and saw El walking towards him with Joyce on her heels. He grinned and held up a spoon of chocolate milkshake.

"Eating a milkshake." He said matter of factly.

"Why are you *eating* a milkshake?"

"It's hard to *drink* through a straw! It's basically ice cream." He shrugged. El looked back at Joyce who just chuckled and shrugged.

"He's got a point. They make them thick and it's hard to suck through a straw." She said. El raised an eyebrow and poked at Mike's side until he scooted over. Holly did the same for Joyce and smiled at her.

"Are you guys just stalking us or are you here to eat?" Mike asked, putting a spoonful in his mouth.

"I ordered while El was in the bathroom." Joyce said.

"You guys have been here that long?" Holly asked. They nodded.

"I didn't notice either of you."

"You're oblivious to everything, Mike." El said, grinning at him. He pouted. "What? You said that when we first met over text message."

"Oh, true." He snorted. He held the spoon up to her. "Want some?" She nodded and he fed it to her. She made an impressed face.

"Pretty good. Don't know why they call it a milkshake when it's literally soft ice cream."

"My point exactly!"

---

Mike and Holly stayed at cookout with El and Joyce until they finished their meals and went their separate ways- Mike and El sharing a kiss that Holly mocked gagging at. On the way back to Steve's house, neither mentioned their mother, or really even thought about her.

When they got back, the two managed to sneak past Nancy and Steve up the stairs and put all the gifts in Mike's room, and then joined the two downstairs.

"Why'd it take you guys so long to buy lights?" Nancy asked, eyebrow raised. Mike looked like a deer caught in headlights and looked at

Steve, who shrugged.

"What can I say? She has great hearing." Mike rolled his eyes.

"We bought a bunch of gifts and got milkshakes. El and Joyce came in and we sat with them until they were done."

"Uh huh, is my present in there by any chance?" She asked, wiggling her eyebrows.

"Could be." He grinned cheekily, and then held up a bag. "We didn't know if you wanted colored or white lights so we got both."

"I told him you'd want colored like usual but he didn't believe me." Holly stated.

"Well, Hols, he was kind of right. I wanna try out the white lights this year." Holly pouted. "Hey, we'll still be able to use them. Steve found a small tree in the corner of the attic and we're gonna put it in your room."

"Really?" She asked. Nancy nodded, smiling. Holly always wanted her own mini Christmas tree in her room, and this was the first time she'd ever get it. She squealed quietly and hugged the two.

"How much were the lights?" Steve asked Mike, reaching into his pocket for his wallet.

"Don't worry about it." Mike waved him off.

"I am gonna worry about it. I want to pay you back."

"I've got plenty, man, I'm not taking your money." Mike shook his head.

"You should know by now that he isn't, babe." Nancy told Steve, who huffed. Mike stuck his tongue out at him but said,

"Now, don't we have two Christmas trees to decorate?"

---

**The Par-tayy**

(7:23 PM) Eleven- I've been meaning to do this forever

(Eleven changed Magic Mike to Noodle)

(7:24) Dusty- well that came out of no where

(7:24) Eleven- not really lmao

(7:25) Eleven- Mike just randomly sent me a picture of 2 noodles and said 'me' with no context

(7:25) Zoomer- did he send you a pic of his dick or something?

(7:26) Willy Will- ...

(7:27) Zoomer- oh shit you said TWO noodles my bad

(7:28) Noodle- yo what the fuck

(7:28) Noodle- El when i said me that was the context

(7:28) Noodle- cus you know i'm a noddle?

(7:29) Eleven- Noddle

(Eleven changed Noodle to Noddle)

(7:30) Noddle- omfg

(7:31) Stalker- max why did you think he was talking about his dick?

(7:32) Zoomer- cus i read it wrong and you know some guys refer to their dicks as noddles

(7:32) Zoomer- or call someone elses a noodle as an insult which doesn't make sense but idfk

(7:33) Noddle- why is max basically a female richie

(7:33) Noddle- and why is my girlfriend betraying me? The world may never know

(7:35) Eleven- I'm not betraying you I'm just stating facts

(7:35) Noddle- why you stating facts everyone already knew?

(7:36) Eleven- shut

(7:36) Eleven- it's a free country i can do what i WANT

(Dusty added Dickard to the chat)

(Dusty added Eddie to the chat)

(7:38) Noddle- oh no

(7:39) Dickard- oh yes XD

## **26. Chapter 26**

**Who am I? Actually updating on time? What is this weird shit?**

**Next update: September 22**

(7:40) Noddle- I just want you guys to understand that adding Richie to the chat means he's gonna steal all your numbers and send you memes literally 25/8

(7:40) Eleven- Mike you can't say anything the first time we texted in our own chat you stole my number to tell me about a fan in your closet. Cus ya know, it gets hot in our room ;)

(7:41) Noddle- okay yeah but like that's useful information

(7:42) Zoomer- ooh is el trying to tell us something? What are you not telling me, Michael?

(7:42) Noddle- El shhh they don't need to know anything.

(7:43) Dickard- oh so y'all have done the do then?

(7:44) Eleven- no we're 100% fucking w you guys

(7:44) Eleven- Noddle here has been sick basically the majority of our relationship so far and has refused to kiss me because he was sick, let alone "do the do". We only just kissed again today

(7:45) Noddle- ^

(7:45) Willy Will- my innocent eyes

(7:46) Zoomer- lmao bitch where?

(7:46) Willy Will- \*middle finger\*

**(Richie sends constant memes for ten minutes)**

(7:56) Stalker- anyways

(7:56) Eddie- I just want you guys to know that Richie thinks this is

hilarious and is laughing his ass off

(7:57) Dickard- I can't wait to come back to Hawkins. Are we staying at the Steve's house or at whore Karen?

(7:57) Noddle- Steve's

(7:57) Noddle- I don't stay with whore Karen anymore

(7:58) Dickard- ooh what happened?

(7:59) Zoomer- Mike have you really not told him what's been going on.

(7:59) Noddle- no he doesn't have to deal with this bs so im not making him

(8:00) Dickard- i'm gonna call your ass right fucking now and you better pick up.

(8:01) Noddle- no wait a min. are we still meeting up at the quarry?

(8:03) Zoomer- I'm answering for everyone, so yes

(8:04) Noddle- okay rich call me

---

"Do you think Richie killed him over the phone or something?" Dustin asked an hour later. The five of them were waiting on Mike, sitting on blankets they brought, around a fire Lucas had made. He was supposed to be here twenty minutes ago and no one's heard from him.

"I hope not." El said, looking at her phone. Only a minute later, they saw headlights at the end of the road and Mike *finally* got there. He grabbed his guitar and slammed the door shut, trudging over to them.

"Dude..." Max said quietly, as Mike took a seat next to El. His eyes were red and puffy, he'd been crying. "What happened?"

"I found out some shit." He sighed, wrapping an arm around El and kissing the side of her head. She hugged him back. "Went's my real

dad, as well as Nancy and Holly's."

"What the fuck." El deadpanned, looking up at him. He nodded.

"Not in the way you'd expect, though. Apparently, dad- Ted- couldn't have kids, so, mom asked one of her childhood friends, and that happened to be Went. They did the fertility treatment shit or something, like he donated it or whatever. It resulted in Nancy, and then me. Apparently, Went had *forgotten* that it was her who had asked him and ended up dating and marrying my aunt Maggie and that resulted in Richie. Then mom used it again and had Holly." He rubbed at his eyes and then ran a hand over his face. "Today has been shittier than I thought it would be."

"How... How did this even come about?" Will asked. "Like did Richie tell you or...?"

"Nope." He shook his head. "When Richie called me, I told him about the bullshit with her, and then he mentioned something about how she shouldn't treat his half brother like that, and I corrected him and said cousin, but he told me. Then I asked Nancy about it, and she told me the truth. I was the only one who didn't know, for sure, that he was my real dad. Even Holly knew."

"That's fucked up."

"Tell me about it. And today, me and Holly went to the mall and before we left we saw mom and Billy and she just stared at us as we walked by. Didn't wave, say a word, not even make a face. And it didn't bother Holly in the slightest. It's fucking bullshit."

"I'm telling you, that sorry shit is brainwashing her or something, Mike. A few years ago none of this would be going on." Max said.

"I'm sorry man, you guys don't deserve this. Karen is just a bitch who doesn't know what she's missing." Lucas told him. Mike just shrugged. El leaned up and kissed his cheek lightly, resting her head on his arm and looking up at him. He looked down at her and smiled softly.

"I'm sorry you had such a shitty day." She said quietly.

"It's not your fault."

"Still makes me feel bad." She shrugged lightly.

"Being here with you- all of you- make me feel better." He said honestly. "You especially." He whispered in her ear and she giggled silently.

"Ugh, you two are disgustingly cute." Dustin mocked gagging and they flipped him off. Lucas threw a particularly big piece of wood into the fire and it got bigger, and the light shone on them more. El gasped quietly at Mike's hair.

"What?" He asked. "Do I have something on my face?"

"Dude, your hair." Dustin said, almost in awe. "That looks awesome!" He put a hand on his head, having forgotten the hairdo Nancy and Holly had managed to give him. El couldn't stop staring once she got a good look at him. It was half way pulled out of his face with a hair tie, the rest just as messy and curly like it usually is. And frankly, it was hot.

"Oh. Yeah, Holly was determined to mess with it earlier. Guess we have two hairstylists in the family now."

"I think El loves it." Will snickered. El looked at him when he said her name, blushing.

"What?" She asked. Everyone started laughing.

"You were staring, sis." He said, smirking at her. She rolled her eyes.

"I mean, look at him! I have a right to stare, he's my boyfriend after all." She grinned at him and turned from him, digging in her bag and pulling out her camera. "Say cheese!" She took the picture before he could register anything, and it turned out *great*. He looked confused but adorable at the same time, the tip of his nose red, along with his cheeks from the cold.

"El!" He whined.

"I'm so keeping this." He continued whining while she laughed and took pictures of the others while they did funny poses in front of the fire.

"Mike, stop your whining and play us a song!" Will said, pointing at him. Mike rolled his eyes but nodded, smiling. He started playing a familiar tune and sang,

*"I was tired of my lady, we'd been together too long,"*

*"Like a worn out recording, of a favorite song,"* Lucas sang, grinning at Max who rolled her eyes.

*"So while she lay there sleeping, I read the paper in bed."* Dustin sang, pretending to go to sleep.

*"And in the personals column, there was this letter I read,"* Will grinned, pointing at everyone, and then El's camera as she took a picture.

*"If you like Pina Coladas, and getting caught in the rain. If you're not into yoga, if you have half a brain. If you like making love at midnight, in the dunes of the cape. I'm the love that you've looked for, write to me, and escape."* Everyone sang at the top of their lungs, dancing around and trying not to fall in the fire or the water only a few feet away- they weren't on the cliff or else that would've happened for sure. El took pictures of them with a smile on her face, having the best time she's had in a while. When the song ended, Mike gave her a big kiss on the lips that left her dazed for a good minute.

"I love you." She said, looking at him. He looked down at her with a smile,

"I love you too."

## **27. Chapter 27**

**Next update: September 29**

**Also, I've figured out how many chapters will be in this story!  
There'll be 35 but I am continuing it as a series.**

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**Thursday, December 14, 2017**

"Mike! You have a visitor!" Nancy called. Mike groaned and got off his bed, trudging downstairs. He heard the familiar voice of his girlfriend and his mood brightened instantly. He grinned as he rounded the corner. She looked behind her and saw him and broke out into a grin too, rushing over to him and wrapping her arms around his middle.

"You'd think they hadn't seen each other in months." Steve said, rolling his eyes.

"It's been four days." El mumbled into Mike's chest. "I'm used to seeing him everyday. It's weird."

"Yeah, what she said." Mike said, nuzzling into her hair.

"Jesus Christ." Steve shook his head. "Disgustingly cute."

"Dustin said the same thing last time we were together." El said, looking back at them.

"Why haven't you sen each other in four days anyways?" Nancy asked.

"Mom and dad are determined to spend every minute with all of us." El explained. "Dad kept complaining that he never sees me anymore, even when I'm home, but you know how dramatic he is." Mike snorted. "Can I stay the night?" She asked shyly, looking up at Mike and then at Nancy, who chuckled.

"As long as you two keep it quiet, I don't care. You're welcome here anytime, El."

"Nancy!" Mike hissed. "Shut up." He grumbled. El patted his back, grinning at him.

"We'll keep quiet." El told her, and released Mike, grabbing his hand and pulling him up the stairs as he sputtered and Nancy laughed her ass off.

"You look like sun burnt grease trap!" El laughed when she noticed how red his cheeks were. He pouted and went into his room, falling face first onto the bed. El giggled and shut the door, plopping on the bed next to him, gasping. "Oh wow! This is comfy!" She bounced a little and he snorted, lifting his head up to look at her.

"Nancy said it was one of my Christmas presents, apparently." He shrugged. "They're gonna bring it to us when they move to Chicago." She smiled, biting her lip. "What?"

"You said us... I don't know, that just makes me happy." He grinned.

"Of course, it's *us* now, not just me." He tilted his head to the side a little.

*God, he is SO cute.*

She got on her side and pecked him on the lips. She pulled away but he moved with her, pressing their lips together again. He lifted himself up with his arms and moved so he was hovering over her, without breaking the kiss. She opened her mouth slightly and ran her tongue across his bottom lip, and he opened his, granting her access. One hand tangled in his hair and the other began roaming across his side and back, wrapping one leg around his thigh.

They eventually broke apart for air, but not for long, as El managed to flip them over, shocking not only Mike, but herself, and straddled his waist. She leaned down, attaching her lips to his collar bone and sucking gently, electing a small gasp from him. She smirked, and continued.

Before anything else that *could* have started happening, happened, there was a knock on the door. El jumped to the complete other side of the bed, nearly falling off the bed. Mike started laughing and sat

up, adjusting his shirt and shaking his head, before standing up and opening the door.

"Can I borrow your charger?" Holly asked.

"Uh, yeah," he grabbed it off the dresser and handed it to her.

"Thank you!" She sang as she walked off down the hall. Mike shut the door again and leaned against it, looking at El who was trying to fix her hair. She looked up at Mike and noticed him watching her, and snorted.

"She's literally the only one who knows what knocking means." He plopped back down on the bed.

"At least we know *one* person who does." She said, scooting over to him. "At my house, they'd just walk in the room whether the door was open or not. And same with the rest of our friends." She rolled her eyes fondly. He chuckled.

"You wanna go to the mall with me tomorrow?" He asked.

"Yeah, I was actually going anyways, gotta get Will his present. He's been up my ass all week and I haven't had a chance to." He laughed.

"Same but with Holly. I love it though." She smiled at him. "Wanna watch Netflix?" He asked. She raised an eyebrow at him.

"And chill or...?" He turned red and she started laughing.

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### Sunday, December 17, 2017

A few days later and Mike and El had everyone's gifts bought and wrapped, including those for each other. Mike decided to finally give to what the rest of his friends wanted and wrote them each a little note, exactly the same, in five Christmas cards (El was included and she didn't know it) to give to them on Christmas Eve during their party at Steve's house.

Mike and El were sitting in the kitchen, watching a video on El's phone when Richie Tozier arrived in all his glory. Neither had really

paid attention to the commotion in the living room, and we're both drinking hot chocolate when Richie, Eddie and Went walked into the kitchen, grins on all their faces. Mike and El had kind of similar reactions. Mike stood up fast with hot chocolate in his mouth and choked on it, and El did a spit take. Mike couldn't believe how tall Richie was now, and El just couldn't believe how identical Mike and Richie both were to their dad.

"Hot damn? More like hot chocolate, eh? How are we doing on this shitty ass, Satan's ass crack wishing ass cold day? Damn, Michael, I know I'm hot but no need to choke." Richie wiggled his eyebrows and Eddie smacked him on the head.

"That didn't even make sense, Richie." Mike choked out, coughing and laughing as he walked around the table. He hugged Richie tight and said, "How are you so much taller?"

"We have good genes, my dude."

"No shit." El muttered and Eddie snorted.

"Right?" He asked and she laughed, nodding. Mike gave Went a quick, awkward hug, and a quick one to Eddie, ruffling his hair. "Quit it! Why do you three always do that to me?" He grumbled, looking in the mirror and fixing his hair.

"It's 'cause you're cute, Edwin!"

"I'll fuck you up. Try me." He pinched Richie in the side. El stood up, wiping her mouth on her sleeve, and shyly made her way to Mike's side, where she sort of hid behind him.

"Is Rich scaring you already?" He whispered to her. She snorted and shook her head.

"I'm weirded out by how much you look alike." She whispered back.

"You get used to it." He told her.

"Who is this?" Went asked. Mike looked at him and grinned.

"This is my girlfriend, El. El, this is... Went." Went put a hand out for

her to shake and she did.

"It's nice to meet you." She said.

"Likewise." He grinned. "Didn't think lil ole Mike here would ever get back out there."

"Shut up." Mike mumbled.

"It's cus he has a small dick!" Richie shrieked when Mike smacked him. "See, El? He's jealous!"

"You're a walking dick so I don't know why he'd be." Eddie said, flicking him on the back of the head once again.

"Speaking of dicks, where's Max and Dustin?" Richie asked, hopping up on the counter next to where El was standing. She smacked his knee. "Ow!"

"Shush." She rolled her eyes and Mike snorted.

"Jeez, Mike, better not get on her bad side."

"You're telling me, she punched Troy and broke his nose and her middle finger in the process."

"Really?" Richie asked, eyed widening. El nodded.

"Yep, it was the day Mike and I actually met. Like talked face to face." She said, shrugging. "He grabbed my ass and then went for my boobs."

"Ugh, I hate that fucker. Remember that time he tried to push Mike off the cliff at the quarry?"

"He did what now?" Went asked, eyebrow raised, and looked at Mike, who shrugged.

"That's not even the worst, trust me." He pecked El on the cheek and made his way up the stairs, and Went followed after him.

"Ah, shit, dad's gonna give him the talk." Richie grumbled, putting his

arm on Eddie's shoulder like he was an arm rest.

"The *who*?" El asked, making a face.

"Not *that* talk. He's gonna apologize and shit, which he *should*, you know? But damn, we just got here, give him a minute to adjust."

"I remember when he found out." El sighed, looking at the two. "We had a campfire at the quarry, by the water, and he was late. When he finally got there he looked like he'd been crying."

"Hell, I think I did too." Richie said, nodding. "It's a lot to take in. We'd always joke about how we were half brothers when we were younger, and we kinda got a little more serious with it as we got older, but I didn't think it was true."

"It's crazy." Eddie said. "When I first met them, I thought they were twins." El snorted.

"If you weren't five years apart I would too. Especially since you'll be the same height as him soon. And you look *exactly like him*. And your dad? How? I didn't look *anything* like my birth parents. Well, I looked a little like my mom when I was younger but damn. If Went didn't have grey in his hair, and I didn't know you, I'd think you were all brothers, just far apart in age or something."

"You don't even know." Eddie snorted.

"Hey, wanna see some embarrassing baby pictures of Mike while he's not here?" Richie grinned, wiggling his eyebrows at her. El nodded enthusiastically.

"Hell yeah."

## 28. Chapter 28

Next update: October 6

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El had the best time looking at Mike's baby pictures. Apparently, Richie had been collecting and hoarding some of the more recent (embarrassing) ones- videos included, which he put on the TV with a giggle- and Nancy snagged plenty of pictures of all of them, and they each had a baby book, which El enjoyed flipping through, seeing a tiny, curly haired Mike grinning at the camera, which soon started turning into glares as he got older.

"I see your booty Mike!" El laughed, pointing at a picture of Mike in the bathtub when he was a couple years old. He turned red and grumbled under his breath and she laughed.

"Have you not seen it before or something? You're roommates." Richie said, making a face.

"And, like, together."

"I haven't even seen him shirtless so..." She shrugged.

"Strip! Strip! Strip!" Richie chanted and started laughing at the look Mike gave him. Mike rolled his eyes. It was quiet for a few minutes, other than Richie and Eddie talking, when El let out a squeak and then laughed.

"Mike, oh my God." She said, covering her mouth. He raised an eyebrow, a smile forming on his face.

"What?"

"I'm sitting in front of you in this picture." She said, pointing at it. He looked over her shoulder to see their class sitting in the bleachers senior year, and Mike and the rest of the Party were sitting behind her and Will. El was smiling brightly, while Mike looked like he was in pain. "Why do you look like you're in pain?" She asked. He snorted.

"Because Max smacked me til I smiled. And she hits hard."

"That's what she said." Richie butted in. The two looked at him weird but he wasn't paying them any attention.

"I bet they'll be together by New Years." Mike whispered in her ear. "If they aren't already."

"I bet they'll be together by your birthday." She said, offhandedly. Mike busted out laughing and she looked at him weird. "What?"

"When's my birthday, El?" He asked, giggling.

"December thirty first- Oh." She smacked her forehead and he cackled. "Shut up!" She whined.

"Is Mike dying?" Eddie asked, he and Richie looking over at them. Mike held up his hand, showing a small amount of space between his thumb and forefinger.

"Lil bit." He choked out, still laughing. They couldn't help but laugh with him- or more like at him in Richie and Eddie's case.

"Richard Tozier." Went said, walking into the room with one hand on his hip, his phone in the other.

"Ooh." Mike raised an eyebrow at Richie, who looked at him. "What'd you do this time, Dick?"

"Fuck off, Michele." Richie waved him off.

"Care to explain why your Principal is asking for you on the phone? During break?"

"Is he? Gimme gimme!" He was strangely excited about it, so Went gave him the phone without question. "Mr. Moya! My guy! What can I do for ya?" He walked into the kitchen and Went made a face, throwing his hands in the air. El chuckled.

"He's a piece of work." Eddie sighed, rolling his eyes.

"You're telling me. I've known him since he was a baby. He peed on me like three times." Mike said. "In one day!"

"How did he manage to do that?" Eddie asked.

"More like why did he manage to do that." El said and Eddie snorted.

"Mike used to be a nosy little shit." Went answered. "He asked why every five seconds and kept asking if he could help change Richie's diaper. He learned after the third time."

"Shhh, don't expose me." Mike said, grinning. After a few minutes of comfortable silence, Richie all but screamed and ran back in the living room, tossing Went's phone back to him and tackling Eddie in a hug.

"What the fuck, Richie?" Eddie shrieked.

"Eds, Eddie, Edwin, baby spaghetti, whatever your name is. I'm graduating with you next year." Eddie froze.

"No way." He deadpanned, looking at him. Richie nodded, grinning. Eddie laughed and hugged him back just as tight.

"What the fuck is going on?" Went asked.

"And I thought you two didn't graduate for like... two more years?" El said, making a face.

"Mom didn't tell you?" Richie asked, as Eddie released him. Went shook his head. "Of course she didn't. I'd be surprised if she even remembered." El felt her heartbreak a little at the look on his face, but a second later the grin returned. "Eds here is a year older than me and he graduates in 2019. I would be graduating in 2020 but I'm graduating early now. They signed the papers and shit and now it's official."

"I... wow, Rich, why didn't you tell me?" Went asked.

"Um, I kinda figured mom would."

"If she had I would've talked about it with you, son." Richie shrugged and Went sighed. "I'm proud of you. You've gotta be smart to be able to graduate early." Richie shrugged again.

"Stop shrugging you smart little shit." Mike grumbled. "This is a good thing, be happy!"

"You're one to talk, Mr. Grumpy Pants!" El said, pointing at him. He put a finger to his lips and shushed her and she giggled.

"Anyways, let's celebrate, my treat." He grabbed Richie and Eddie's wrists and hauled them up.

"But-" Went started.

"No buts!"

"When did you get so strong?" Richie muttered. "Ha, you said butt." Mike rolled his eyes.

"Come on, up you go." He gestured to Went and grabbed El's hand, pulling her up and smiling at her sweetly.

"I'm always up for free food. See ya at the car Michele." Mike flipped him off.

"Truck." El corrected. Richie raised an eyebrow at her and she shrugged, pointing at Mike.

"Habit I got from him. He corrects me every time I say car."

"It's 'cause it's a truck." Mike shrugged and ran up stairs real quick to put on his boots. El-being the only one left in the house- grabbed his keys as she heard him stomping down the stairs and held them out to him. He pecked her on the cheek and shooed her out the door.

As they were in the truck, Mike and El in the front, the other three in the back, El asked,

"What about Holly, Nancy and Steve?"

"Psh, they ditched us to go eat pizza." He replied.

"Rude." Richie muttered.

"And disrespectful." El added with a grin. He laughed and held up a hand for a high five and she did so.

"You've been around Max too long." Mike mumbled and she snorted.

"I mean, when you're in class it's usually just me and her talking about weird shit."

"Ooh, I like weird shit!" Richie said, bouncing a little. "Like what?"

"Boy do I have something for you." She grinned, turning in her seat so she could look at them all. "First off, we find it very weird that you are *Richie Tozier* from *IT* ." She gave him a pointed look and he shrugged, grinning, and looked at Went.

"Are you like a universal donor or something 'cause that kid looks like us." Richie gestured to himself and Mike. Went snorted and shook his head.

"No."

"Is Pennywise real, Richie?"

"Hell, probably. I'm not gonna say no. Remember last year when there were clowns running around with weapons and shit?"

"Don't remind me." Mike grumbled. Richie snickered and clapped him on the back.

"Oh come on, bro, clowns are great."

"You say that because you are a clown, Rich." Mike rolled his eyes.

"You're not wrong." Eddie said, shrugging. Richie stuck his tongue out and made a fart noise.

"Honestly though, I've read the books, watched the original and we all saw Chapter One. How in the hell did you manage to have the same name as the characters?"

"It was one hundred percent a coincidence. I was born way before the book came out." Went said. "I'm named after my great grandpa, and that was just our last name. I never knew that I had the same name as the character until I met Maggie, who told me about it. She used to love it, that's why we named him Richie." He chuckled a little, nudging him. "We did *not* expect for him to be a Trashmouth like in the book, but I'm glad he is." Richie shrugged. "Not sure where he got

his smarts from, though. Sure wasn't either of us."

"You got that shit right." Richie said, shaking his head. Went glared at him. "Not you, dad! I mean mom. Dumbass bitch." He muttered.

"Richie."

"You know it's true." He grumbled.

"She wasn't always like this, son, you know that. And neither was Karen. They used to be really close, I don't know what happened."

"I do." Mike mumbled. Mike sighed, knowing that he was supposed to fill their silence. "Remember when mom first started fucking around?" Went nodded. "That was when she would leave for a couple days at a time, no one knew where she went. But she slipped up on the phone one day, and that's how I found out. Maggie was... they'd been screwing the same guy, for I don't know how long. They were pissed with each other and got in a fight, and they haven't really talked since. I'm sure there's a lot more to it than that but I didn't exactly stick around to listen to the bitch." No one said anything and Mike sighed, rubbing a hand over his face. "I'm sorry... I shouldn't have said anything about it."

"No, no, it's fine, Mike." Went said, and Richie nodded.

"It doesn't surprise me, they're both whores." Richie shrugged. "I've been hurt by her so many times I've become immune to it at this point. Ooh, I like this song! Turn it up!" And just like that, the conversation was over as they all laughed at Richie's ridiculous dance moves.

## 29. Chapter 29

Next update: October 13

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They ended up going to a Mexican restaurant- where Richie unsurprisingly got chicken tenders and fries- when El asked,

"So, have either of you thought about what what colleges you're going to?"

"Chicago." Richie replied. She raised an eyebrow.

"Really?"

"Yep! I wanna be close to my siblings, ya know?" He shrugged and Mike snorted. "We only see each other during Christmas, it's always been like that. Except for when we were younger and lived closer." El nodded at that.

"What about majors?"

"Photography." Richie replied. El choked on her drink and smacked Mike.

"Ow! What did I do?" He whined, rubbing his arm.

"You didn't tell me he was into photography!" She exclaimed.

"Oh." He chuckled. "Oops?" He offered and she rolled her eyes.

"I'm confused?" Richie said, tilting his head to the side slightly.

"I'm a photography major." She told him.

"No way!" She nodded, grinning.

"You'll love it, if you stick with it."

"I will be, trust me. I have an old ass Polaroid camera in one of my bags and I take pictures all the time."

"Of me specifically." Eddie sighed, shaking his head. El snorted and Richie just shrugged.

"It's worth getting hit every time."

"What about you, Eddie? What do you want to do?"

"Mechanical engineering." He replied. "I love cars and working on them."

"He does, he's obsessed." Went added. Eddie shushed him and Went snorted. They talked more about that for a few minutes, before Went brought up Mike's major. "What exactly is included in music? Like what are you doing exactly?"

"I'm getting my BM ." He replied. "So is Dustin."

"The fuck is a BM again?" Richie asked. "Bowel movement?"

"Bachelor of Music." Mike said, rolling his eyes. "Jesus."

"What kind of jobs can you get with that?"

"Oh jeez." He rubbed the back of his neck. "There are a lot. The last week of school before break our teachers handed out lists of jobs, the descriptions and the salaries."

"Do you remember any of them?"

"One's a cruise ship performer." He said, snorting.

"I can see you doing that." El giggled. "Steal one of Richie's Hawaiian shirts and wear it during all of them." Mike laughed and Richie stuck his tongue out.

"There was another one that sort of stuck, a film composer. You can make a lot of money."

"What is that exactly?" Eddie asked.

"You make music for TV and movie backgrounds." He replied.

"Ooh, I think you'd be good at that." El said.

"Really?"

"Yeah." She nodded. "Just those random little instrumentals you play on your guitar or the piano is awesome." He shrugged, his cheeks turning pink.

"Thanks." She rolled her eyes fondly and patted his hand.

"Jesus, Eds, were you hungry?" Richie asked, laughing. Eddie flipped him off.

"As a matter of fact, I was, so fuck off."

"Language, children." Went joked.

"Fuck no." They chorused and he cackled.

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**Monday, December 18, 2017**

**11 AM**

"Does anyone wanna go with me somewhere?" El called, walking into the house loudly. "Everyone except Mike, 'cause I gotta get his birthday present."

"You act like you live here." Steve said, giving her a look. She snorted.

"And? I practically do since I'm with Mike."

"Good point."

"Also, you've perfected that deadpan look that dad does."

"He really has." Mike said, appearing out of nowhere. "What is this I hear about a birthday present?"

"It's a secret."

"I'll go!" Richie yelled, coming down the stairs pulling his coat on. She made a face.

"You heard me from all the way up there?"

"You weren't exactly trying to be quiet, Babe." Mike said, then turned pink at the name. She raised an eyebrow.

"Babe? Hm, I like it." She pecked him on the lips and he smiled shyly.

"I'll try not to steal your girl, Mikey boy." Richie said, patting him on the back. Mike rolled his eyes and shoved him playfully.

"Sorry, but you're way too young for me. Besides, I like taller guys." El winked at Mike, who snickered. Richie made an affronted noise and pouted, waving at his dad before practically skipping out the door. El kissed Mike again before following him.

"I know I haven't known you long, but like... why are you in such a good mood?" El asked, buckling her seat belt. He shrugged.

"I figured out what I wanted to get Eds for Christmas. Are we going anywhere near Hobby Lobby by any chance?"

"Not exactly but I can take you there." She told him.

"Really?"

"Yeah!"

"Awesome. What are you getting Mike?"

"For Christmas? Or his birthday?"

"Uh, both."

"I got him a phone case that has leave me alone on the front in big white letters, a keyboard cover for his laptop because Dustin somehow broke it, and a beanie for Christmas. I got him a hoodie so I can steal it in the future and I'm getting him a Bluetooth keyboard to connect to his phone for his birthday."

"That was a mouthful." He said, laughing. "You cut right to the chase, huh?"

"I know what I want." She grinned.

"So why the keyboard?"

"Because sometimes he writes on his phone, in google docs. Like when his computer is charging or something. Or when we come back here he can bring it on the ride instead of getting his lap top out and he can type like that. Someone from one of my classes has one and mentioned it to me."

"Oh, okay. Cool! I think he'll like that."

"I hope so. What are you getting Eddie?"

"You know those car sets you can buy that you have to put together from scratch? Like toy race cars, but bigger?" She nodded. "He likes building those so I'm gonna get him two that he's never done before. And some chocolate, he loves it." She chuckled.

"So, do you like music as much as Mike does?" She asked, glancing at him. He shrugged.

"I kinda sing and play guitar, but he got most of that talent." She rolled her eyes.

"You could've fooled me after that performance in the car yesterday." He snorted.

"What about you?"

"Me?"

"No, I'm talking to the steering wheel." She flipped him off and he snickered.

"Do I what, play instruments and sing?"

"Dude, we were just talking about this."

"Well, *dude*, if you *must* know, I do play the piano and I used to sing."

"Hmm, why used to?" She shrugged.

"I mean... A few years ago, I'd sing when I was happy. I doubt Mike's

told you but when I was eighteen my boyfriend died." She glanced at him and he frowned.

"I'm sorry." She waved him off.

"Don't be. I loved him so much, and I used to sing to him all the time. He couldn't sing to save his life." She chuckled fondly. "When he died I just... never felt happy enough to sing anymore, because it was kind of our thing. I'm not saying I'm not happy with Mike, because I *am*. So happy. He sings to *me* sometimes, and I love it.

"I get where you're coming from, kind of." Richie said. "I know it's completely different, but my mom used to sing to me when I was little. She couldn't sing either, but she did and she would sing Michael Jackson songs. Not sure why, but..." He shrugged.

"I'm sorry about... all that, too." She told him.

"It's okay. I'll just be glad when I graduate and move out here with you guys."

"Honestly can't wait either. Me and you should start our own business when you graduate college." Richie looked at her with wide eyes.

"That would be *so fucking cool!* "

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Two hours later, the two were in Wal-Mart just because they could be. They'd bought everything they needed, got lunch, and were now messing around in the store. They both had their phones out, taking videos of each other and sending it to the chat.

"I have been looking for this child for five minutes." El said, looking down at herself on her screen, looking down each aisle. "How can someone so loud, disappear so easily- Oh my God." She burst out laughing and turned the camera around. Richie was in one of the Christmas decoration aisles, wearing a Santa Claus hat that had a tiara glued to it with a cape- she had no idea where she got it from- and standing on a skateboard. "Richie, what the fuck." He laughed and posed. She ended the video and took pictures of him, sending them to the chat with a giggle. She put a matching hat on and took a selfie of them and threw them in the shopping cart with a snort.

(1:32 PM) Eleven- (selfie)

(1:32) Eleven- we're twinning.

(1:33) Dickard- Sorry eds, els my new best friend.

(1:35) Eddie- devastating

(1:35) Zoomer- rude and disrespectful

(1:36) Zoomer- i thought you were my bff El

(1:37) Noddle- excuse me but what am i

(1:37) Eleven- Max you're my girlfriend.

(1:38) Noddle- what the fuck

(1:38) Eleven- Mike's my boyfriend

(1:39) Eleven- And Richie's my best friend.

(1:39) Noddle- I agreed to NOTHING

(1:40) Eddie- guess I'll take back you Christmas present, Richard.

(1:41) Dickard- NO ILY

(1:42) Dickard- UR MY CUTE LIL EDS DON'T DO THAT PLEASE

(1:42) Stalker- das a lot of caps

(1:43) Eddie- we'll see

(1:43) Eddie- also he only texts in all caps in our chat.

(1:44) Eddie- (proof)

(1:45) Dusty- yo Richie

(1:45) Dusty- what the fuck

(1:47) Eleven- (video of Richie laughing his ass off while he tries to scan stuff in self checkout)

(1:47) Eleven- he "can't even right now"

(1:48) Noddle- giggly boy

(Eleven changed Dickard to Giggly Boy)

(1:50) Giggly Boy- El I love you

(1:51) Eleven- ILY2

## **30. Chapter 30**

**Next update: October 20**

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**Saturday, December 23, 2017**

El spent the night over at Steve's house up until Thursday, and went home Friday morning- of course, she and Mike both didn't want her to leave, but she felt bad about not spending as much time with her parents, and he felt bad about basically making her miss out on it.

Eddie and Richie were at the arcade with Max and Lucas, Went was out doing who knows what, same goes for Nancy and Steve, and Holly had gone with El and Will to see a movie, so Mike was home alone. He'd opted out of doing all that, as he was working on some stories- a certain one, to be exact- and some stuff for school.

He was in the middle of a chapter when there was a knock on the door. He grumbled a little to himself and closed his laptop and put it on the couch next to him before standing and opening the door. He didn't expect the person standing there to be Raven. Not one bit. He stared at her for a couple seconds.

"Um. Hi?" He made a face.

"Hey." She bit her lip. "I, um... Can I come in? It's kinda really cold out here."

"Yeah." He moved to the side and shut the door behind her. He walked into the living room and sat down. She hesitantly sat on the other end of the couch. He scratched the back of his neck, "What are... What're you doing here, Raven?"

"I wanted to apologize." She said quickly, tucking some hair behind her ear and looking at him nervously. He didn't say anything. "I'm sorry for blaming you for everything that happened. There was no way it was your fault, you didn't control the people on the road." She paused and he nodded once. "I'm sorry for acting the way I did, and treating you like I did. Throughout our entire relationship, really."

She ran a hand through her hair. "You were an amazing boyfriend, and I was such a bitch to you. I never deserved you."

"You didn't." He agreed.

"I guess I deserved that."

"You did." He sighed. "What do you really want, Raven? There's no way in hell you're here just to apologize."

"I don't want *anything* Mike. Just your forgiveness."

"It's gonna take a *while* for that to happen." He replied. "I loved you, I gave you everything I could that you wanted, and what you did was wrong."

"I know, and I'm *so* sorry. Um, actually, I... I wanted to see if you'd maybe... take me back? But you said loved so I-"

"Hell no." He shook his head, laughing humorlessly. "Raven, you buried our sons ashes. Because you couldn't *bare the thought of seeing them* after what I *did*. You barely let me go to the funeral, and you didn't give me any say so in his name, nor did you give him my *last name*. What makes you think that I'd *possibly* want you back?"

"Because I was the mother of your child."

"Was?" He raised an eyebrow. "Wow, fuck you too. You know what-" He pinched the bridge of his nose. "Just go, Raven. My life is great right now, I don't need you to ruin it."

"Your life wasn't great when you were with me?" She asked, as if not believing what she was hearing.

"Do you not understand that the way you treated me made me feel like shit? Do you know how many times I just wanted to say fuck it and- and do *it*? I didn't want to feel that way anymore, Raven, and it was because of *you*. I didn't want to feel that pain. My son didn't get a chance to live, I felt like it was my fault, I still do! My parents fought and my dad didn't give a shit about me, my mom was fucking around on guys barely older than me, and the only people that really gave a shit about me was my sisters and my friends, who you, by the way,

talked shit about *constantly*. And I *let you*. So no, Raven, my life was *not* great with you." He felt his eyes stinging, just waiting for the tears to fall, but he wouldn't let them, not in front of her. "I'm in love with the *greatest* woman I've ever met, and I'd never give you a second chance anyways. *Never.*"

"You don't have to be so rude, Mike." She huffed.

"Yeah, I do. Trust me, I could go on for hours about how fucked up you are and be an even bigger dick like you used to be, but I'm not gonna stoop down to your level. If you don't wanna hear it anymore, get the fuck out."

She left with a childish whine in her throat and suddenly he was alone. He sat there for what felt like hours, when in reality, it was only thirty minutes, because Max, Lucas, Richie and Eddie were back, standing in front of him.

"Mike." Max said, nudging his foot. He blinked and looked up at them. He'd been in his head for so long he didn't hear them come in. "What's wrong?" He blinked again.

"Nothing." He said, shrugging.

"Nothing? Dude you look like you're about to cry." Richie said, raising an eyebrow.

"Yeah, uh... just, I was thinking about a sad part of this story." He told them, sitting up straighter and grabbing his computer. It wasn't actually a complete lie, he was writing a sad part in the chapter- like really sad, if you ask him- but he was daydreaming of the life he would've had if that accident hadn't happened.

"You look like someone kicked your puppy." Lucas said. "How sad is it that you look devastated?"

"I... I'd rather not talk about it." He said with a shrug. He swallowed. "Did you guys have fun at the arcade?" He asked Richie and Eddie, who glanced at each other and nodded.

"I beat Richie at Dig Dug." Eddie said proudly.

"They still have that game there?" Mike asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Yeah, they have a lot of old games still."

"You'd know if you ever went, Wheeler." Max said, plopping down on the couch next to him. He rolled his eyes and went to his google drive- where he usually wrote everything- and began scrolling through one of the documents.

"What'cha working on that's making you so sad, Mikey boy?"

"It's uh... something I've been working on for El." He said, biting his lip. Obviously, that's not what upset him *today* but truth be told it sure has. They all looked at him with raised eyebrows.

"Dude, not sure if you should give something to El that made *you* cry..." Lucas said. Mike sighed.

"I know but, I think she's like it. It's based off- you guessed it- another country song."

"Oh God, it's definitely sad then." Max snorted. "What song?"

"Saving Amy by Brantley Gilbert." He replied. "It was playing at a restaurant El and I went to a couple days ago."

"Hmm." She nodded. "Are you gonna let us read it?"

"We'll see." He replied, beginning to type. She snorted and reached across him to grab the TV remote, turning the TV on and switching it over to Netflix. She put on some comedy that he usually loved, but his heart wasn't in it. He laughed a few times, not like he usually did.

Those feelings wouldn't go away. Sorrow, despair, that small amount of guilt just wouldn't leave him no matter what he said or did. The last time he felt like this... He remembered feeling like this back when the accident happened. He felt so horrible, like he didn't deserve to live if his son hadn't, that it was his fault. He never actually... tried, but he thought about it, he wanted to, but Max found him out one day. He hadn't left his room in *weeks*, not willingly, at least. He'd missed about a week of school but when he started back, he didn't try. People like Troy just made him feel worse

about himself. She walked in on him crying his eyes out and she comforted him, and he told her everything he was feeling.

God, he loved Max. She was his best friend, like a sister to him. He wasn't sure where he'd be if it weren't for her. They'd helped each other, too many times to count. He smiled a little at the thought of her, glancing at her as she laughed. He was glad that she was happy today. She didn't have to deal with her shit family, anymore, not really. It seemed like she glowed at times.

Then, the- probable- love of his life walked in, yelling as if he couldn't hear her.

"MIKE! I BROUGHT YOU CHICKEN." She stopped in the doorway, blushing slightly. "Oh, I didn't think you'd be down here." She said sheepishly. Those feelings faded a little, just at the sight of her, and a little more when she smiled at him sweetly.

He smiled at her, shutting his laptop once again and placing it on the coffee table ass he walked over to her. He reached out for her and she moved to give him the bag of food, but instead he grabbed her by the waist and pulled her into his lap. She landed with a tiny yelp and giggled. He hugged her to him and kissed her cheek. She smiled at him cheekily and said, "Well, I'm gonna have to bring you chicken more often if this is the thanks I get."

## 31. Chapter 31

The beginning of this is all over the place, but that's just how Mike's thoughts are. They're going every which way and he doesn't know what to do about it.

Next update: October 27

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Sunday, December 24, 2017

After El and everyone- except for Richie and Eddie- left, Mike's thoughts began creeping up on him again. This time, accompanied by doubt and regret. For what, you ask? Mike wasn't completely sure. It sure wasn't about anything Raven had said. He didn't love her anymore, nor did he *ever* want to take her back. The doubt, he believes, is because he doubts he ever loved Raven, but then the regret took hold of him, as he felt like he shouldn't think like that. Sure, he loved her. Not the way he loves El, and he knew Raven a lot longer than he's known El, but he loves El more than he could love Raven. He felt bad about that, so bad he had a sour taste in his mouth. He shouldn't say anything like that about the mother of his child.

Or well, as she said, she *was* the mother of his child. As in she *isn't* the mother of his child anymore, just because he died.

His Christmas Eve was already starting to turn to shit, and it wasn't even noon yet. *Thanks a lot, you fucking thoughts. Get out of my head.* He tried thinking about El, and how much he loved her, why he loved her. That helped to an extent. But eventually, those good thoughts were overrun by the bad ones, and he began daydreaming again, as he lied on his bed.

He could see himself with his son and inevitably, with Raven, as they took him to meet Santa, or even a ways off, on his birthday. Some time in late June or early July, he'd be turning four years old. He couldn't really imagine what he would look like, as he and Raven looked completely different. She had straight as straw blonde hair, bright blue eyes, and she was tall. He figured he would've ended up

pretty tall. He could imagine his nose, though he hoped he wouldn't have had it. He didn't like his nose.

This wasn't the first time he'd ever daydreamed like this. In the months following the accident, he'd find himself thinking about those types of things, and it make him feel even worse. Now that she apologized to him, and doesn't blame him anymore, he's found just the tiniest slither of peace, but he still felt like it was his fault. He'd wanted her to come over to his house. He could've gone to hers, and instead be the one in the accident.

His thoughts were interrupted two hours later, at 1 o'clock, when there was a loud banging on the door. He groaned, looking at his phone and noticing the time.

"How the fuck..." He muttered. The banging started again. "What?" He yelled.

"You need to get your lazy ass up, Wheeler!" Steve yelled. "We've gotta go to Wal-Mart and buy decorations for the party because *someone* forgot too." Mike grumbled pitifully as he got out of bed and opened the door. "Wow, you look like shit."

"I'm certainly feeling like it." He grumbled.

"Are you *still* sick or something?" Steve asked with a raised eyebrow.

"He's *love* sick." Richie sang as he whipped past them and down the stairs. Mike rolled his eyes.

"No, I just... I'm not feeling up to anything. Just an off day, I guess. I didn't sleep much last night." It wasn't a complete lie. He got maybe... four hours of sleep. You know, daydreaming, wishing, the whole shebang.

"Well... you don't have to come with me, if you want to get a little more sleep." Steve said, expression softening a little.

"Nah, I'll be fine. I'm used to it at this point, ya know, 'cause of college." Steve snorted.

"I believe it. Well, just get ready and let me know when, and we'll

go." Mike nodded and Steve left him alone. He sighed, staring at his bed, wishing he could just bury himself under the covers and stay there until... whatever was going on inside his head was over with.

But, he couldn't, so he changed into actual clothes, brushed his teeth, and he and Steve left after saying their goodbyes to the girls.

"So, Wheeler, do you happen to know what Nancy's favorite song is?"

"Witch Doctor." He muttered absentmindedly.

"What?" Steve asked, eyes wide.

"Oh, what?" Mike asked.

"*Witch Doctor* is Nancy's favorite song?" Mike froze for a second and laughed.

"No, sorry." He shook his head at himself. "That used to be a song we would sing together when we were little. Don't ask why. Um... If I'm being completely honest, it's probably Can You Feel the Love Tonight." He said, shrugging. "Or Tiny Dancer."

"Hmm, the first one is by Elton John, right?"

"They both are, idiot." Mike rolled his eyes.

"It's not my fault you're majoring in music and know fuck all about everything." Steve grumbled. Mike shrugged. "You think you and your lil friends could sing that tonight?"

"Why?"

"Why do you think?" Steve glanced at him, giving him a look, before turning back to the road.

"I don't know."

"I'm proposing to her, idiot."

"Oh! I thought you were doing that *tomorrow*?"

"I was, but I decided to do it tonight. She may have mentioned that

she'd love to be proposed to in front of friends and family when we watched a Christmas movie the other night."

"Seems more like she hinted it to me." Mike replied.

"Maybe, maybe not. I don't think she'll be expecting it though. But could you ask?"

"I guess." Mike took his phone out and texted the group chat.

(1:46 PM) Noddle- hey are you guys up to singing tonight

(1:48) Zoomer- what for? idrc i'm down either way jc

(1:49) Dusty- hell yeah boii

(1:49) Noddle- Steve wants us to sing a elton john song

(1:50) Willy Will- Elton John is the shit I'm up for it

(1:51) Eleven- I'm not agreeing to anything yet but whyy

(1:52) Noddle- idek Steve just asked me to ask you guys

(1:55) Giggly Boy- Am I included

(1:57) Noddle- he said yeah

(1:57) Giggly Boy- I'll do it if El sings too

(1:58) Eleven- I agreed to nothing.

(2:00) Willy Will- wait el, has Mike ever heard you sing?

(2:03) Eleven- hahahaha

(2:03) Eleven- no...

(2:04) Willy Will- JANE ELEANOR HOPPER.

(2:04) Stalker- oh shit the full name.

(2:05) Giggly Boy- can someone tell me why I didn't know her real

name was Jane and that her middle name WASN'T ELEVEN LIKE THE NUMBER

(2:06) Eddie- cause you're a lil bit of an idiot

(2:07) Giggly Boy- Rude

(2:07) Giggly Boy- but true carry on

Mike laughed loudly at the last text, locking his phone and putting it in an empty cup holder.

"What?" Steve asked, grinning.

"Richie's just being an idiot." Mike said, shaking his head.

"Figures."

"He thought El's real name was Eleven and then called himself an idiot."

"So that little shit is in a group chat with a bunch of college kids?" Steve asked.

"Yeah..." Mike looked at him. "Why?"

"Seems a little weird to me."

"What do you think we talk about in the chat, Steve?"

"I don't know, drugs, too much coffee, parties."

"Steve."

"What?"

"Steve." Mike face palmed.

"What?" He exclaimed, laughing a little.

"Do we really seem like the people who do that?" Steve sighed.

"Good point. But you know damn well that Dustin and Max like to

party."

"I'm well aware, I've spent many nights waiting for them to call or text for me to pick them up." He snorted. "I think it was on Dustin's birthday when they all got drunk except for me, El and Lucas, and Dustin was in the basement playing the drums at like four in the morning so El went down there and took the drum sticks from him and then passed out on the bean bags."

"That doesn't surprise me."

"Nothing should at this point, dude." Mike said. Steve nodded.

"So what do you talk about in that chat?"

"I mean... we don't really use it that much, actually. Dustin added Richie only like a week or so ago, along with Eddie, and Richie sent memes for like ten minutes."

"So you don't talk about all that stuff?"

"We will literally ask about coffee once a week, and it depends on who drinks the rest of it to ask." He said. "And you know damn well those two probably talk about it themselves, or Richie does, at least."

"Yeah, he asked me for weed."

"What?" Mike exclaimed. "When was this?"

"Yesterday."

"Did you give him some?"

"Maybe."

"Steve, what the fuck?" Mike smacked him in the shoulder. "He's fifteen!"

"Like you weren't trying it at that age."

"No, I tried it at fucking eighteen and you know why."

"True."

"And, you never gave me weed when I asked so that's fucked up."

"Do you want some weed, Mike?" Steve asked, trying not to laugh.

"No, but I probably need it." *To calm myself the fuck out.*

"Maybe later we'll go out and hit it a few times."

"Okay." Mike nodded in agreement. "But without Richie."

"Without Richie."

"Does that make me a pothead if I want it?" Steve snorted at that.

"No, dude. You'd be a pothead if you smoked it all the time like some people. Besides, being a pothead would be better than an alcoholic or a crackhead."

"Fair enough."

---

Two hours later, the two were back at the house with majority of the decorations put up, when Dustin and Lucas walked in through the door with a decent sized box. Mike eyed them as they went into the living room without a word to anyone. Nancy looked at him and made a what the fuck gesture. He shrugged and turned to go join them, but nearly ran into the short brunette, who gave him a bright smile upon seeing him.

"Hey Mike!" El said happily, wrapping her arms around his neck to hug him. He chuckled and hugged her back.

"Someone's excited, huh?"

"I love Christmas." She said cheekily. "And I may have had half a bottle of wine with Max, who went to the bathroom." He chuckled, shaking his head at her.

"You're adorable." He said.

"No, you are." She booped his nose. "Are you okay?" She asked, staring at him. It felt like she was staring into his soul, almost.

"Yeah, I'm fine, why?"

"You don't seem like yourself." He smiled a little.

"I'm fine, I promise." *Don't lie to her.*

"You're one hundred percent sure?" She asked.

"One hundred percent sure." He smiled at her and kissed her cheek.  
*Liar.*

"Okay, well, I'm gonna go put all my shit in your room so that I can get ready later, then I'm gonna help them set up the karaoke machine." She practically skipped away from him after picking up her bags.

"Wait, the *what?*"

## 32. Chapter 32

Next update: November 4 (I'm actually posting that day sksks)

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"So, what's up?" Steve asked, looking at Mike as he handed him the joint. Mike mad a face as he hit it.

"The sky." He replied. Steve rolled his eyes and took the joint back from him.

"I'm serious, here, Wheeler. Something's up with you."

"Why do you think that?" Mike asked, confused.

"You haven't been yourself since yesterday, you've been spacing out a lot." He replied simply. Mike raised an eyebrow. "I may be an idiot but I pay attention, Mike. I've known you since you were twelve, practically a baby." Mike frowned a little at that. "Is it something that has to do with Raven?" Mike stared at him.

"Why... why would you think that?"

"I saw where she's been liking posts on your Instagram."

"Wha- She has?" He asked, shocked. Steve nodded. "I'm not even logged in... and how do you even know that?"

"It's rare that I get on there, and when I do I'm nosy as shit. Now spill, why's she all of a sudden liking your posts?"

"It's nothing." He took the joint back.

"Mike. It's not nothing." Mike sighed, leaning his head on the fence. The two were in the back corner away from the house, hopefully where they wouldn't be seen.

"She came over yesterday..." He told Steve everything. Everything that had been said between them, all Mike's thoughts and feelings on it, *why* he couldn't sleep, *everything*. By the time he finished talking, the joint was gone and their eyes were red, Mike's even more so for

obvious reasons. "And you know, this shit with my family makes everything even better. My dad isn't even my dad, my mom doesn't give a shit about us. I haven't spoken to her since before Thanksgiving. What kind of mother doesn't try to contact their kid? Doesn't want anything to do with them?"

"Shitty ones." Steve said immediately. "I'm gonna be brutally honest with you, Mike." He waited until Mike looked at him. "There's nothing you could have done to save the baby. I know that sounds cruel of me, but it's true. You and I both know that I've never been very religious, but I do believe that everything happens for a reason." Mike swallowed. "I don't know what that reason is, but it was supposed to happen."

"It still hurts, Steve."

"I know it does. I doubt it'll ever get easier for you, but look at Hopper. His little girl was seven when she was died. She was sick and he couldn't help her, not the kind of help she needed, at least. I bet if you talk to him today, he'll tell you that it'll never get easier, but you'll be able to move past it. You won't forget and it'll still hurt, but you'll be moving on." He paused for a moment. "On your birthday, I want you to let loose and drink, have a good time."

"But-

"Mike, you were not the drunk man in the car that his Raven. You were not the reason your child didn't get a chance at life. It's not hurting anyone if you drink on your twenty first birthday. You won't be driving, at all, so what's the big deal? Ted isn't your real dad so it's not like you'll become an alcoholic like him." Mike looked down at his hands.

"It's gonna take a lot more than that to convince me that it wasn't my fault." He said, finally. "It's gonna take a lot more time to really *move on* ."

"Mike-

"No, let me finish. You don't know how it feels to lose a child, whether it's one you got to know or one you didn't, it isn't that easy,

Steve. But... you have a point, and I'll try. You can't force me to drink, but we'll see."

"I thought you were getting ready to cuss me out." Steve said. Mike rolled his eyes. "I have a question and a request for you."

"Oh God."

"It's not bad, I don't think."

"Get on with it, then." Mike cocked an eyebrow.

"First, you love El, correct?" Mike nodded.

"More than anything."

"You need to tell her about what happened yesterday." Mike's eyes widened. "Don't start stuttering and shit, she deserves to know. You never know, Raven could contact her and tell her all sorts of lies- or even worse, tell her that you two are going out behind El's back."

"Good point. I'll tell her at some point." Steve nodded.

"It should be sometime today." Mike groaned and nodded. "That was part of my request. I also think you should talk to your friends about what's been going on. Inside your head, everything you told me."

"Are you a fucking therapist or something, Steve? Because you sound like one." He chuckled.

"No, but I think you might need one." Mike faltered for a second. "If you don't want to talk about your feelings with everyone, maybe you should start seeing a therapist. At least for a little while." Mike stayed silent for a few minutes, before finally responding.

"I'll look into it." He sighed. "What was the question?"

"Okay. I know you and El love each other, but I also know that you two haven't been together long. If you two were to get married, would you want kids with her?"

"Yes." Mike said instantly. "I'm pretty sure she's it for me, Steve. I

never thought I could love someone like I love her. If she wants kids, we'll have them." He said matter of factly.

"Good." They didn't say anything for a few minutes.

"Dude, your weed game sucks."

"Fuck off, Wheeler. I don't do that loud shit, who knows what you'd be doing if you smoked that. You'd probably jump in the pool even though it's like twenty degrees." Mike snorted.

"That got deep."

"What I just said or stuff before?"

"Before." Another few minutes go buy. "Steve?"

"Hm?"

"I'm hungry." The munchies finally kicked in.

With a laugh, Steve stood and helped Mike up, and they walked into the house.

"Goddammit, Steve, stop getting my brother high every time he's home for break." Nancy said, huffing. She kissed the two on the cheek before walking out the door. Mike blinked.

"What the fuck." He whispered.

"You're high?" El asked, eyebrows raised as she looked at him.

"Um..." He looked at Steve, who shrugged, and then his friends, who gave him similar looks. "A little bit."

"May I ask why?"

"Um...Something, uh, happened yesterday while you guys were gone?" He offered. She sighed.

"I asked him to smoke with me, it wasn't much, Ella Bella, so it's not a big deal." She pursed her lips.

"I'd rather you be high on weed than crack. It better not be a regular thing, Michael." She gave him a pointed look. His hand froze mid air after stuffing a cookie in his mouth.

"S'not." He said. "I shwear." She snorted. Steve backed away slowly as El offered Mike a bite of her sandwich, which he took gladly.

"What happened that's bad enough for him to agree to smoke with you?" Max asked, following him.

"Stuff." Steve replied, taking Dustin's bowl of popcorn.

"What kind of stuff?"

"He'll tell you when he's not as high." Steve replied. "Now if you need me, I'm gonna go eat the rest of this popcorn and take a nap until everyone gets here. Tell Mike the song is Can You Feel the Love Tonight." Without another word, he strutted up the stairs.

"Why does Steve think he's a model?" Richie asked, coming in the kitchen, where Mike and El were sitting side by side at the island.

"Because he is, duh." Mike said as if it was obvious. He shoved a mouthful of chips in his mouth. "Have you seen his hair?" El snorted.

"Don't talk with your mouthful." She scolded.

"Sorry." She looked at him and he giggled.

"You're gonna get fat eating the whole bag of chips, Mike." Richie said, leaning on the other side of the island.

"Your mom." Was his reply. Richie cackled.

"You're not wrong."

---

Two hours later, the two's high had worn off and Mike managed to get his friends- Will had arrived not long after the *your mom* comment- and girlfriend in his room and they had a long talk, all together, about what happened that year. El learned many new things about Mike, and there were tears from everyone at some point.

He told them everything, how he felt about Raven, how she'd treated him and everything after. At the end, they'd had a five minute group hug thanks to Dustin. Afterwards, everything went back to normal- or as normal as it could be since they were still letting Mike's words set in- El and Max kicked the boys out so they could get ready.

The boys managed to set up the karaoke machine easily, and once that was done, Pearl and Charlie Sinclair, Claudia, Hopper, Joyce, Jonathan and Nancy had arrived with food and presents. Went, Richie and Eddie appeared once everyone had set everything down and began snooping around the kitchen.

"Nope, get out of the kitchen!" Joyce scolded, waving a rag at them. "We're eating in a few minutes, hold your horses."

"You look just like Mike." Claudia told Went, who chuckled. "And so do you." She said to Richie. Went and Richie looked at each other.

"Mike!" Richie yelled.

"Jesus Christ, Richie, I'm right here." Mike grumbled, walking over to him.

"I assume you haven't told your friends parents the news?"

"Oh, Michael has news for us?" Pearl asked, walking over with Charlie.

"Well, I wouldn't call it *news* ." Mike said with a roll of his eyes.

"Rude."

Mike then went on to explain that Went was he and his sisters real dad, and told them what had been going on over the last few months.

"Holy- Mike is about to *die* ." Dustin said, in awe. Mike turned to look at him.

"Why am I about to-" Mike's eyes widened at the sight before him. "Whoa." His jaw literally dropped.

Max and El walked down the stairs, arm in arm, acting like they were

about to go to prom. At least, that's what it looked like to everyone else. They both had their hair and makeup done- which was rare for Max. Max was wearing a dark green, long sleeved, tight fitting romper. With *heels*.

El on the other hand, also wore heels, but she had on a red dress where the straps fell slightly down her shoulders. It was knee length, not as tight fitting as Max's romper, but pretty close.

Lucas looked much like Mike, eyes wide, jaw dropped.

"You'll catch flies, Wheeler." Hopper commented, nudging him. "You too, Sinclair."

"Uh..." Lucas said, and Mike made a noise that no one had ever heard before as he shut his mouth. He glanced around, just noticing that the other women were dressed up as well.

"Why-Why are y'all dressed up?" He squeaked. El giggled.

"Well, I figured that since we had a tradition with mom and Ted-" Nancy made a face at the mention of the two, "that we could start our own and dress up and celebrate Christmas together."

"Oh." He nodded. He looked at El again, who was smiling shyly at him. Max walked over to Lucas and smacked him gently on the cheek with a laugh, pecking him on the lips.

"You look awesome." He managed to tell her. Mike walked over to El as everyone started talking again, and without a word, took her hand and pulled her into the kitchen.

"Mike-" He interrupted her with a passionate kiss, her words falling on deaf ears as she melted into it with a happy sigh. Pulling away, he said,

"You look gorgeous." She smiled up at him. His eyes widened a little. "Not that you aren't always gorgeous but extra gorgeous." She full on laughed at that, putting her head on his chest as she laughed. He chuckled with her. She calmed down, looking back up at him, letting her hands move across his shoulders and down his arms as she pushed him away a little, giving him a good look.

"I love you in sweaters." She said, giving him a grin. "You're so freaking cute."

"Stop!" He whined. She giggled.

"I'll do what I *want* ." She replied, raising an eyebrow.

"Oh really now?"

"Mhm..." She went to kiss him again but was interrupted.

"If you two would stop undressing each other with your eyes, we're about to eat so we need Michele here to help grab chairs and shit." Richie said, grinning. Mike groaned and El snorted.

"I hate you."

## 33. Chapter 33

I hope you guys are enjoying this! Only seven more chapters to go!

Next update: November 11

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"So, can someone tell me why Max is wearing heels?" Mike asked, sitting between El and Holly on the couch after dinner. Max rolled her eyes. "Because she didn't even wear heels to prom so... I'm confused."

"Well," El took a sip of her drink, "I forget how the conversation came up, but she and Richie were talking about heels, and Richie didn't believe she could walk in them so they made a bet. Richie owes her fifteen bucks." Mike looked at Richie for a few seconds before shaking his head.

"Okay..." He eyed Max, who had a weird look on her face- grinning but eyebrows furrowed. "I didn't even know you *owned* heels."

"They're El's." She responded quickly. He snorted.

"You're feet are bigger than El's, Max." Dustin cackled at that. "I would know considering you two love to put your feet in my face." He gave them both a pointed look and El laughed.

"I just have them." She said, finally. "I don't think you'd want to know the reason, Wheeler." His eyes widened when she glanced at Lucas. He choked on his spit.

"Well then." He said, standing up. "I'm gonna go, you know, try to forget the information given to me."

"You do that." She said, cheeks turning red. El busted out laughing as Mike nearly ran up the stairs to his room.

*Whatever she was insinuating is gross. Gives me a great excuse to go smoke, though.*

Mike put on his shoes and grabbed a coat, taking the pack out of his bedside table. No one was paying him any attention so he sneaked out the back door and sat in one of the chairs on the porch. He smoked maybe half of it before he heard the door open and a soft voice ask,

"Are you okay?" He turned his head and gave El a small smile and nodded.

"Yeah, I'm alright." She walked over to him and stood beside him, one of his other coats on.

"Are you still... thinking about stuff?" He turned away from her and blew some smoke out of his mouth, putting the cigarette out on the concrete. He turned back to her.

"Kind of. It's not as bad as it was yesterday afternoon and today." He told her honestly. "It's just always in the back of my mind, and after she came over yesterday it's just messed me up. I was itching to get a cigarette since halfway through dinner, honestly." She chuckled.

"Can I sit?" She asked.

"Of course- Oh!" He snorted as she plopped herself in his lap, wrapping her arms around his neck and curling up like a child. He wrapped his arms around her to keep her steady.

"I'm sorry about everything that's happened." She told him quietly. "I wish I could make it all better for you, but I don't know what to do. What can I do, Mike?" His breath caught in his throat.

"Just... Just keep being yourself around me. Don't pity me like everyone else has." He told her. "You alone has made me feel better. I know you love me, and I love you. That's all I can ask of you." She smiled slightly, and nodded.

"I do love you." She whispered, kissing his cheek. She rested her head on his shoulder, and he leaned against her head. They sat like that for a while, until you could no longer see the stars thanks to the clouds rolling in.

"Hey lovebirds, we're opening presents in here!" Eddie called. Richie

laughed behind him.

"They were making out, Eds, don't bother them." He stage-whispered.

"Fuck off, Dick!" Mike called back and Richie laughed again. El started to get up but Mike stopped her, standing up easily and carrying her bridal style.

"Oh, I like this." She giggled. Eddie rolled his eyes at the two but held the door open for them.

"Damn, Mike, have you been working out?" Lucas asked, grinning.

"Are you calling me fat?" El asked, crossing her arms. Mike raised an eyebrow at him.

"Uh, no... It's just, you know... Mike is a noodle?" He offered. Mike rolled his eyes and put El down, pecking her on the cheek.

"Wanna go?" Mike joked, standing in front of Lucas. Lucas snickered.

"Maybe later." He replied.

"I'm holding you to that, Sinclair." Mike winked at him and Lucas cackled.

"Let's open presents! Let's open presents!" Richie and Dustin chanted.

"Jesus." Hopper grumbled. "Give me some of your energy."

"Right?" Went asked, grinning. "I've been saying that for years now."

"Lemme go grab something." Mike said as El handed her his coat with a smirk. He went back upstairs and kicked off his shoes and took off his own coat, before grabbing his guitar and joined everyone back in the living room. He sat on the floor by El's legs and grinned up at her.

"Who's first?" Dustin asked, bouncing in his seat, making his mom smack his knee to make him stop. Steve- being closest to the tree-reached under and pulled out a small rectangle.

"Mike!" He said, grinning at Dustin- who pouted- as he handed Mike

the present.

"Who's it from?" El asked, leaning on her knees and looking over his shoulder.

"Holly." He replied. He looked up to see his little sister looking at him nervously, waiting for him to open it as Steve passed around gifts. He tore into the paper, and picked at the tape on the box. "Jeez, Hols, am I not supposed to get into it?" He joked. She snorted and shrugged. Finally, he got it and opened, revealing a guitar strap with a galaxy design on it. His eyes widened slightly.

"How'd you know?" He asked, surprised. He'd seen it when they were at the mall but decided not to get it- the reason unknown even to him.

"I saw you looking at it when we went to the mall." She said, shrugging.

"I love it." He smiled at her and she grinned. As everyone was handed their presents and opened them, he changed guitar straps, and finally opened his stuff.

"I have presents for you four, El and Eddie." Went told them. "But you'll get them *on Christmas*." Richie pouted. "What? Would you rather not run through the house yelling about Santa Clause? Butt naked?"

"Shut up!" Richie whined, blushing.

"I have plenty of stories to tell, about all of you." Went replied smugly.

"Do you?" Nancy asked, an eyebrow raised.

"Mhm. I remember you tried to wrap Mike up in wrapping paper and give him to grandma and grandpa to take home with them." Mike's jaw dropped as he looked at his older sister, everyone else laughing- Holly and Richie cackling together. Nancy snorted, covering her mouth with her hand.

"Nancy!" Mike scolded. "That's just rude!"

"You cried too much!" She argued. "I didn't like you back then!"

"Wow." He huffed, turning away from her to pout childishly. "My own sister, my own *blood*, didn't love me!"

"Oh jeez, you're turning into Richie." Went snickered. Mike glared playfully.

"Hey, anyone who turns into me is lucky!" Richie said.

"This honestly makes me glad I'm an only child." Dustin said, snorting.

"Same." Eddie agreed.

"We don't have older siblings who try to get rid of us or annoying younger siblings." Eddie nodded in agreement and high fived him.

"You do have siblings, Dustin." Lucas whispered to him. "Your mom's hundreds of cats." Dustin smacked him and Lucas laughed.

"I have an actual present for you tomorrow." Mike told El as he gave everyone their cards. She laughed and nodded.

"Jesus, Mike, you didn't even try to get us gifts this year?" Max said with a brow raised.

"Just open the thing, fucker." He replied with a snort. They opened them at the same time and Dustin *screamed*.

"Mike! No way!"

"I'm really going to regret this, but yeah." He nodded.

"What is it?" Joyce asked, confused. El grinned as the rest of the party yelled at Mike excitedly.

"They've been wanting to get a pet for the house since we started college." She explained. "And since Mike's grandparents own the house and Mike practically does, he had the say so- which they all agreed on, but he's finally letting them get a pet."

"And please, *no* cats." Mike begged. Dustin pouted. "I don't trust you guys enough, so El is in charge. You guys get to pick it together but no cats." He looked at El, a pleading look in his eyes. "Please no cats." He whispered. She chuckled and leaned down to kiss his head.

"No cats."

After presents had been opened and people- aka Richie- declared their love for their presents, wrapping paper was cleaned up and boxed squished for the fire later, and Claudia and Lucas' parents left, it was time for the proposal.

"I see Michael has his guitar out." Steve said, looking at him with an eyebrow raised.

"That I do, Steven."

"Not my name, ass."

"Michael might be my name but I hate it so, Steven it is, *ass* ." Mike retorted.

"Touché."

"Why don't you play us something?" Joyce asked. "We haven't heard you in a while."

"And I, personally, never have." Went said.

"Oh jeez." Mike chuckled. "Okay." He grabbed his guitar, grinning at Holly as he put the strap over his head. He messed around with the strings for a couple seconds, before beginning. "*There's a calm surrender to the rush of day, when the heat of the rolling world can be turned away, an enchanted moment and it sees me through, it's enough for this restless warrior just to be with you...*" Nancy raised an eyebrow at Mike as he, Max, Lucas, Will, Dustin and Richie started singing.

"*And can you feel the love tonight?*"

"So uh, I didn't prepare a speech or anything," Steve started, and she turned to him, curious, "I just want to say that I love you more than

anything in the world. Nancy Wheeler," He got down on one knee and literally *everyone* gasped, but Mike kept singing,

"*And can you feel the love tonight?*"

"Will you do me the honor and become my wife?" He held the box up to her and opened it, gulping visibly.

"I knew you were acting weird!" She exclaimed, jumping off the couch and onto him. "Yes!" She squealed, kissing him and hugging him tightly. Everyone cheered and congratulated them as Steve finally put the ring on her finger. Mike had stopped singing, but he was still playing the guitar and smiling at them.

"Told you she'd say yes." He told him.

"You were in on it?" Nancy asked, looking at him.

"Mhm... He asked for permission last month." Steve grinned cheekily and nodded.

"You know, at the time he was kind of, like, the only important guy in the family, so I felt it was only right to ask him."

"You shit." Nancy laughed, hugging him again. "Mike, stop playing that damn guitar so I can hug you too."

"I will continue playing until you apologize for calling it a damn guitar."

"You just called it an it." Hopper said, raising an eyebrow.

"My guitar, man, shhh." Mike shushed him.

"Jesus Christ, Richie, have you been giving him pointers on how to act like you?" Nancy asked. Mike snorted and stopped playing, setting it to the side and standing, pulling her into a big hug.

"So you've known his whole time?" Dustin asked Mike, who nodded.

"That's the only reason you asked us to sing with you?" Max asked.

"Pretty much, yeah."

"Wow, rude." Lucas pouted. "We never sing together anymore."

"We're busy, man." Mike waved him off.

"Busy my ass, all you do is write songs and make out with El." Hopper grunted at that comment. "Like all we ever hear is you two giggling and shit."

"We might make out a lot but dammit, Lucas, we're watching vines compilations on my computer." El retorted, standing up and wrapping her arms around Mike's waist. He grinned and stuck his tongue out at Lucas. "And may I remind you, our rooms are right next to each other. We've heard some shit that you two wouldn't want to get out." Max cackled and Lucas' eyes widened.

"Stop teaching your girlfriend to blackmail us, Wheeler."

## 34. Chapter 34

Can I just say El is amazed by Mike without a shirt? XD

Insecure Mike calls for some serious Mileven fluff.

It gets a little... I don't know what the fuck you'd call it but even I don't know where the hell my brain was going with this, but I hope you like! XD

**Next update: November 18**

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"Question." Mike said.

"Answer." Dustin replied. Mike snorted.

"Why the hell did you guys bring a karaoke machine but we didn't even use it?" He asked.

"Oh, that's for your birthday." Max said, plopping in Mike's lap.

"You have a boyfriend, you know." Mike said, looking up at her.

"Yeah, and you have a girlfriend."

"I feel like you two have had this conversation before." El said, raising an eyebrow at them.

"We pretty much have."

"The last time I sat on him he didn't have a girlfriend." Max said matter of factly.

"I want you to know that sounds dirty as fuck." Dustin said, laughing.

"Not like that, ass hat!" She flipped him off.

"Anyways-" Mike started but Richie interrupted him.

"I love Zendaya. Anyone wanna go see The Greatest Showman with me?"

"Richard, I'm gonna kick you so far up the ass." Mike said, running a hand over his face. "It's literally almost ten o'clock, you want to go tonight?"

"Yes, I do, because literally no one but me and whoever decides to take me will be there." He said matter of factly.

"I have been wanting to see it, actually." El said meekly. Mike sighed and nodded.

"Alright, children, let's go." He looked at Lucas and Max, "You guys wanna go?"

"Nah, we're gonna take Dustin's stupid ass home and head home too." Lucas said and Mike nodded.

"You want to go?" Richie asked Eddie while El went and asked Will knowing he loved Zendaya.

"Yeah, I'll go."

"I'll hold your hand during the scary parts." Richie grinned at him. Eddie stared at him for a second.

"Never mind I'd rather sleep--"

"Rude!"

---

## **Two and a half hours later**

"COME ALIVE!" Everyone except Mike yelled at the top of their lungs. He was laughing at them.

"Ooh!" Will exclaimed. "Mike and Hopper should sing The Other Side together." Mike snorted.

"As if."

"I will deadass ask him." El said, looking at Mike seriously.

"I'm just glad Zac didn't die." Eddie said.

"I told you I would hold your hand during the scary parts." Richie said with a grin.

"There were no scary parts?"

"But you held my hand when Zac went into the fire though."

"Shut up." Mike snorted at the two. He dropped El and Will off at home, kissing El goodnight.

"I love you." He told her.

"I love you too." She kissed his cheek before hopping out of the truck and literally running with Will inside the house.

"I can't wait to sleep." Mike muttered, driving off.

"You need some sleep, o brother o mine." Richie said, patting his shoulder.

"Fuck off, Dick." Richie snorted.

"I only speak the truth." Mike rolled his eyes and snorted. The second they got home, Mike stripped down to his boxers and fell into bed, falling asleep almost instantly. He managed to like the picture El tagged him in on Instagram and comment a heart before passing out.

It was a picture Jonathan had taken for them, arms wrapped around each other with El's head resting on his arm with a hand on his stomach. She captioned the picture with the cheesiest thing possible- *All I Want for Christmas is You* with a heart.

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## Monday, December 25, 2017

Mike was woken up the next morning by a small, curly haired brunette jumping on him.

"Merry Christmas sleepy head." El giggled as he groaned loudly. She moved off him long enough for him to roll on to his back and then straddled him, putting her hands on the bed next to his head to hold her up. He shook his head like a dog to try and get his hair out of the

way but to no avail. She moved it out of the way for him.

"Thanks." He croaked. She grinned- she loved his morning voice.  
"Merry Christmas. What time is it?"

"Nine." She told him.

"Why here so early?" He asked.

"We always have Christmas early in the morning at home because dad has to work today." She explained.

"Oh, okay. Good, I get you all to myself for longer." He grinned up at her.

"Mhm. Go brush your teeth and I'll give you a surprise." He raised an eyebrow at her.

"M'kay." She rolled off him and stretched out. He sat on the edge of the bed before stretching. He went and brushed his teeth before walking back out and going to his dresser to get some shorts. He put them on and went to put on a T-shirt when El said,

"Mike, stop." He furrowed his brows as he did as she asked. She sat up on her elbows and her eyes raked his body- he didn't have a shirt on. Lean and wiry- more so than she thought in the slightly oversized shirts he wore. He didn't have abs, no, but dammit he was gorgeous. There was a thin stripe of dark hair going into his shorts- her eyes drawn to his V-line.

"Um..." He clasped his hands in front of himself.

"I'm sorry... I just, I've never seen you shirtless and we've been living together for like three months- dating for one. Merry Christmas to me." She chuckled at herself.

"Yeah, uh, that was kinda for a reason." She tilted her head to the side. She didn't like the tone of voice.

"C'mere- no, don't put on the shirt please." She had a feeling she knew what he was gonna say. He sat back down on the bed and she crawled over to him. "What was the reason?" She asked.

"I didn't want you to see... this." He shrugged.

"Why not?" She asked, raising an eyebrow. She put her hands on his shoulders and squeezed slightly.

"I don't... like the way I look." He said quietly, cheeks turning red as he tilted his head down so she couldn't see him.

"But... you're beautiful." Mike shrugged.

"People always tell me I'm too skinny."

"Do those people matter?"

"No but they're right. I look like a noodle."

"Mike, I'm telling this because I love you. You are a noodle and not just because you're skinny- which, by the way, you're not. No, you're not all beefy and shit like some guys but you're perfect the way you are. I call you Noodle because you're *slim* and tall as *shit*. Not because I think you're skinny." He chuckled a little. "Besides, I think giant muscles are gross and not good for you. Like, I have little to no strength in my legs but there are some women with muscles the size of my thighs. It's *weird*." He snorted. "You're beautiful and I love you, Mike. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise." She kissed his shoulder and wrapped her arms around his arms. He put a hand over hers and leaned his head against her shoulder.

"I love you too." He leaned his head back a little more and kissed her jaw lightly.

"Besides," She whispered. "Long and skinny noodles are always better than short fat ones." Mike slapped a hand over his mouth- just barely able to cover up the shriek of laughter.

"El!" He squeaked and she giggled, shrugging.

"You know what they say about big feet?" She asked.

"That's been proven not true." He retorted and she grinned. Moving away from him, she put her hands on his arm and pulled at him, making him turn so he was facing her. She grabbed one of his hands.

"You know what is true, though?" She asked. He raised an eyebrow. "If your ring finger... is longer than your index finger... you have a big dick." She held his hand up and wiggled her eyebrows. He cackled.

"How on earth did you come up with that?"

"I was scrolling through Facebook, right? Well, I clicked this article that was about myths or some shit and the big feet thing was on there and then went on to explain that this was tested on a bunch of men and most guys with longer ring fingers had bigger dicks." She shrugged. "So, is it true?"

"I'm not telling you!" He said with a laugh. She pouted. "That's weird, El."

"No, you." She retorted. "I'm gonna find out eventually, but I'm just gonna assume since your ring finger is longer than your index. Come on, I wanna give you your surprise."

His surprise mainly consisted of being able to touch her anywhere he wanted- not like he minded.

---

A while later, the two made their way downstairs- only to realize they were still the only ones awake.

"I have an idea." Mike said, grinning at El. She raised an eyebrow and nodded, walking into the kitchen and coming back with a santa hat on, another one in her hands. Mike was messing around with the stereo opposite the TV, and within seconds, *All I Want for Christmas is You* was blaring loud enough to wake the neighborhood. She laughed loudly and he joined her, walking over to her. She put the hat on him and took his hands.

"Let's dance!" Neither of them were actually *trying* to dance, and despite Mike's tall and lanky body, it wasn't as bad as he claimed to be. Holding hands, they jumped around, El swinging her hips and Mike jumping high as shit, shimmying his shoulders in a way too similar to her dad, making her laugh.

"What the fuck." Richie grumbled as he and the rest of the family came downstairs in the middle of the song. The couple froze for a second, looking at them, before continuing their dance.

(10:38 AM) Eddie- Couple goals right here  
(10:38) Eddie- \*video of Mileven dancing\*

(10:41) Dusty- FUKC I SHIP

(10:43) Eleven- jokes on you I've been shipping it since Mike didn't realize Mileven was our ship name.

(10:43) Noddle- No, jokes on you, I've been shipping it for the last two and a half years. Beat THAT.

(10:44) Eleven- sksksks I love you

(10:44) Noddle- I love you too bb 3

(11:44) Zoomer- MERRY CHRISTMAS MOTHER FUCKERS

(11:45) Zoomer- I've been shipping Mileven since the first time Mike described you to us- AKA the first day he ever saw you.

(11:46) Eleven- I ship Mucas.

(11:46) Noddle- \*high five emoji\*

(11:48) Stalker- fuck you guys

(11:48) Stalker- but merry christmas

## **35. Author's Note**

There probably won't be a chapter until sometime next week, I haven't had a chance to write much last week, and Thanksgiving this week, but know that it's gonna be a good one ;D

Sorry for the delay!

## 36. Chapter 35

Sorry for the wait guys! With Thanksgiving and all it's been a mess- and I've just started helping take care of an older lady so I'm busy all the time as of now and it's only been two days XD. Hopefully the next one will be done quicker! 3 3

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Wednesday, December 27, 2017

"Michael, Eleanor, we have a problem." Richie said, barging into Mike's room. El shrieked and grabbed Mike's shirt, covering herself with it and falling onto the bed. Mike sat up quickly.

"Richie!" Mike exclaimed, throwing a water bottle at him.

"Look, I'll make fun of you guys later, but we have a *problem*." He sat on the end of the bed. "I'll close my eyes until you have the shirt on." Mike and El looked at each other and she threw on the shirt.

"Christ, you can open your eyes. What's wrong?" Mike asked.

"I'm in love with Eddie."

"Okay, and?" Mike asked. "We already knew this."

"But I'm in love love, Mike!" Richie said, slapping the bed with both hands. "Like, he's so cute I want to cry type of love, you know?"

"Um, yes?" Mike made a face. "I don't see what the problem here is, dude." He looked at El, who shrugged.

"The problem is he's my best friend and we'll never be anything more than that."

"Okay, hold up, who said *that*?" El asked.

"Um, me? My conscience? My mother, mainly. I'm not good enough to her, you know? If I can't be good enough to my own mother, how will I be enough for the guy I love?" He shrugged, looking at his hands as he picked at his cuticles. Mike and El looked at each other

and then back at Richie.

"Your *mother* can go suck Satan's asshole." Mike told him, snapping his fingers in front of Richie's face to get him to look at them. "You're good enough, Richie. You are. And if anyone isn't good enough for anyone, it's Maggie. She's not good enough to be married to Went, or to be your mom. I'm sorry, but in my honest opinion, she seems to just be a fucking egg donor rather than a mother."

"Not at all offensive- accurate. I'm just glad someone other than myself finally said it."

"Eddie loves you too, Richie." El told him softly. Richie snorted.

"As a friend, maybe."

"No, he loves you the way you love him." She said matter of factly. "And I'm one hundred percent positive on it. He looks at you the way you look at him, or the way Lucas looks at Max and Steve at Nancy."

"Good, I'm not the only one who noticed that." Mike said. El smiled at him.

"He watches you, Rich. Every time I look at him he's looking at you, with this... this look in his eyes. And when you fell down the stairs yesterday- *again*- he rushed to make sure you were okay." Richie shrugged.

"Richie." Mike said, standing on his knees and reaching for Richie, placing his hands on his shoulders and looked him in the eyes. "Eddie loves you. You love Eddie. Be like El and say fuck it and tell him, or literally like El- and kiss him."

"I don't like how close you are to me."

"Richie." Mike rolled his eyes, and sat back on his knees. El giggled quietly.

"Sorry, sorry, continue." He pushed his glasses up on his nose.

"You never know what could happen, Richie. The worst he could say is no, but we know for a fact that he won't." Richie just shrugged

again.

"Okay." El sat up straighter and pointed at Richie. "You are going to kiss him when the clock strikes twelve on New Years."

"Who said that-"

"I did." She deadpanned. "You're gonna kiss him, and you guys are gonna be the second best relationship."

"Who's the first?" Richie asked, tilting his head to the side.

"Me and Mike, duh, but that's not the point here, Richard."

"Oh shit, the full name."

"I want you to be happy, and I want Eddie to be happy. You two together means you're *both* happy, get it?" She poked his shoulder and he snorted.

"Fine, fine, get it. We'll see, okay? Gotta gather up the balls to do it."

"Not the right saying but you do you." Mike shrugged and Richie cackled.

"Thanks guys, for real. Like he was so happy when he saw those cars I got him, did you see?"

"I did!" El said, grinning. "He was adorable."

"He really was." Richie grinned. He and El continued going on about how cute Eddie was, so ignoring the two, he grabbed his phone and checked the group chat.

(6:37 PM) Dusty- random girl on Ig: do you have a girlfriend?

(6:37) Dusty- Me: I have anxiety.

(6:38) Noddle- me in middle school

(6:39) Zoomer- Mike no one asked if you had a girlfriend in middle school

(6:39) Noddle- i'm well aware of that you bitch

(6:40) Noddle- I meant the anxiety and anxiety ALONE.

(6:40) Zoomer- that's depressing

(6:41) Noddle- I was depression

(6:42) Dusty- Mike used to be the definition of depression

"Mike, why the hell were you the definition of depression?" El asked, giving him a look. He looked up and saw the two looking at him.

"Uh, well, Troy was beating my ass every other day and my dad who is not my dad is a dick so... depression."

"Mood." Richie nodded in agreement. "I get my ass beat all the time too, bro." Richie held a hand up for a high five and Mike just stared at him. "Ugh, rude. Anyways, I wonder why we're such bully magnets cause like- we're hot as fuck."

"Oh my God." Mike face palmed. "Get out." He pointed towards the door and Richie cackled.

"I love you too, Michelle."

"Dickard." Mike grumbled and with a wave, Richie strutted out of the room, closing the door behind him. Mike eyed El, who was staring at him, a small smile on her face. "What?" He asked.

"I just love you guys relationship." She told him, flicking a curl out of his face. He grinned at her and shrugged.

"He's an annoying little fucker but I love him."

"As you should." She nodded and lied on her back, motioning for him to come to her, holding her arms out. He chuckled and lied with her, letting her wrap him in her arms, his head on her chest.

"Your boobs are comfy." He muttered. She laughed and he grinned at her.

"Not gonna lie, I love all this making out and... such."

"You love it?" He asked, looking up at her. "It's the most obvious thing that *I* do." She giggled.

"By the tent in your pants every time, I'm well aware." He turned pink but nipped at her ear and she giggled again.

"Quit it, you turd. I wanna cuddle." He snorted and nuzzled his face into her chest. "Mike!"

"What? I'm just getting comfortable." He told her innocently.

"Mhm." She tapped his head and he laughed. After a few minutes, she said quietly, "I'm just curious- don't take offence to this or anything-"

"Uh oh." He moved his head to her upper arm and looked at her. She chuckled.

"Do you know if you'll be drinking on your birthday?" She asked. "I know how you're against *yourself* drinking, but if you don't, I won't."

"El, if I don't drink, and you want to, you can. It won't bother me."

"I know, but I want us to celebrate and have fun together, not me drunk as a skunk and you sober."

"I know... Steve told me he wanted me to drink, have fun with it, you know?" She nodded. "I know it wasn't my fault and that I wouldn't be driving at all, but it's still hard." She nodded again, combing a hand through his hair. "It's been a couple days since she popped up out of no-fucking-where and if it weren't for Steve noticing how weird I was *apparently* acting, and you guys, I'd still be... like, in my head or something like I was."

"I feel bad that I didn't notice... I guess it's because I haven't known you as long as them. The only difference was you were quieter than usual, and you're kinda quiet to begin with." He chuckled, nodding.

"It's okay, El. God, the start of February is the worst time of year for me, and you'll probably hate me."

"I highly doubt I could hate you- but why?"

"I'm just a moody asshole for the first couple days. All I do is lay on my ass and go to school and beat myself up about what I could have done that day. And I honestly don't remember *what* I do on the day," He sighed. "Max and the guys tell me I'm just an asshole or sleep all day, they know what happens. I just don't want to hurt you somehow."

"You won't." She told him. "I won't let you, for one, but I'll be there for you as long as you need me to be." He nodded.

"I love you."

"I love you too."

## **37. Chapter 36**

**Oof, sorry for taking almost a month to update! Next chapter is Mikey boy's birthday so it'll hopefully come sooner since I know all that's happening XD. Hope y'all enjoy!**

**Did you guys have a good Christmas/Holiday? I hope you did!**

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**Thursday, December 28, 2017**

"Mike!" El called, "Where the hell is he?" She turned to Went, who shrugged.

"He's outside making a snowman with Holly and Richie in the backyard." Eddie said, looking out the window at them. "Holly just put snow down Richie's pants."

"Oh jeez." El snorted and put her coat and boots on, joining the three outside. "It's too early in the day to be out here, you heathens!"

"Who're you calling a heathen, heathen!" Richie retorted, throwing a small piece of snow at her.

"It's also noon, El, it's not early." Holly said, grinning at her.

"It's early for that one." She looked at Mike, who grinned at her. "If it wasn't for school he'd sleep all day."

"Very true." Mike agreed.

"Anyways, mom and dad want to take us out to lunch if you're up for it."

"Shit, I'm up for anything as long as food is involved." He replied, throwing a rock at the snowman- laughing in triumph when it stayed in place. She snorted and cheered for him and he winked at her.

"I'ma go shower 'for we go." He told her and she nodded, kissing his cheek as he jogged back in the house. She watched as Holly and Richie rolled around on the ground for a minute or two before taking

a picture of them and going back inside to edit some pictures while Mike got ready.

"You get ready so damn fast." She said as the two got in his truck. He shrugged.

"Washing my hair is a whole different story but it's cause I don't wear all that shit on my face." He gave her a look and she stuck her tongue out at him.

"I need that *shit* thank you very much." She pouted.

"I will make you sit in the back of the truck- you don't need it."

"Thanks, babe, but I do." She made a kissy face at him and he rolled his eyes.

"You're beautiful with or without it." She gave him a soft smile and intertwined their fingers, resting their hands on his thigh.

A few minutes later, the two arrived at the restaurant where Hopper and Joyce were waiting.

"It's about time." Hopper grumbled playfully.

"Says you, Mister I'm always late." El retorted, sitting across from Joyce as Mike sat across from Hopper. He grinned at her and shrugged. "Besides, I looked for Mike for like ten minutes before Eddie told me he was out playing in the snow with Richie and Holly."

"This early in the morning?" Joyce asked, an eyebrow raised in Mike's direction. Mike huffed a little and hid his face in the menu.

"You know what you're getting already, Mike, no need for the menu." El grinned at him and he stuck his tongue out at her. She did the same.

"Real mature." Hopper said, rolling his eyes.

"Says you!" The rest of the table chorused and he laughed, raising his hands in surrender.

"Fine, fine." The waitress finally came over to them and took their orders. Hopper kept asking Mike what he wanted for his birthday and Mike argued with him every time- telling him he didn't want anything.

"You know what I want?" Mike asked once they got their food.

"What?" Hopper asked, grinning.

"You to stop asking me what I want." El snorted loudly and Joyce giggled a little. Hopper rolled his eyes. "Really though, I don't want anything- only that everyone is happy and having fun during the party." He shrugged. "And that we all stick to our new year resolutions." He eyed Joyce, who eyed him back.

"That's very sweet." El told him and he smiled at her. "But I got you a couple things for your birthday so suck it." Hopper coughed to try and hide his laugh, and Mike snorted. "Also, why are you two eyeing each other like that?" She asked, glancing between Mike and her mother. Joyce smiled and raised an eyebrow at Mike, who nodded.

"Every year, we give each other a new resolution to try and do." She explained. "Last year, he made a big deal about mine being me sticking with going grey because he thinks I'd look beautiful with grey hair-"

"And you would!" He exclaimed. She waved him off and he huffed.

"And his resolution was to not let his hair get this long but we both failed." She shrugged innocently.

"I love this." El sighed, sitting back in her seat.

"What?" Joyce asked.

"I'm just happy that you three get along so well. Mike was kinda terrified when he found out you were my dad." She looked at Hopper and then at Mike, who glared at her playfully. "But in all seriousness, it makes me happy to see you guys joking around and stuff." They all grinned at her and Mike kissed her cheek.

"I'll cut my hair but I'm dying it purple." Mike said randomly, and

Joyce stared at him.

"Why do you hate his hair so much, Joy?" Hopper asked.

"It's not that I hate it- I love it! But like with Will, I'd rather see your face."

"Honestly same." El nodded in agreement. "But I like it long too. I'll give him lessons on how to get it away from his face if he doesn't cut it."

"I'll cut 0.05 centimeters off and dye it purple." He confirmed.

"Christ." El's phone went off a couple times before anyone could reply, so she checked it, and turned to Mike.

"Kali wants to know why you're not answering your phone." Mike made a face and started patting at his pockets.

"I must've left it in the car. I'm gonna go grab it." She nodded and went outside- without a jacket, which annoyed the hell out of Joyce. The boy *just* got over the flu a week ago!

When Mike didn't come back for a solid four minutes, El looked outside, just in time to see Troy punch the hell out of Mike.

"Fucking-" She stood up so fast her chair fell over as she practically ran outside- her parents following. Mike spit what looked like blood out. El was halfway to the truck when Mike retaliated, punching Troy so hard she heard the crunch of... something. Mike took him by the collar and slammed him against the truck.

"If I ever hear you say another fucking word about her again, *I will beat your ass.*" Mike growled.

"You broke my nose, asshole." Troy cried out when Mike's grip on his collar tightened.

"What the hell is going on here?" Hopper boomed, surprising the two enough for Mike to let his collar go, backing up slightly when he saw El in front of Hopper, but Troy swung at him again, not as hard as the first time- but definitely hard enough to leave another bruise, on

his eye this time. Mike lunged at him again, quite literally knocking Troy out for a couple seconds. Hopper caught the piece of shit before he hit the ground and just dropped him *carefully* on his ass.

"What the fuck." El deadpanned.

"This sorry fucker was talking about you." Mike hissed.

"What'd he-"

"I'm not telling you." He interrupted. "He deserves everything handed to him." El glared for a second before her eyes softened when she saw his bleeding lip and slightly swollen eye. She turned to Troy, eyes narrowed, and grabbed a fist full of his hair, tipping his head back.

"Let me tell you something, you dick nose slut waffle, whatever you said about me? You can shove it up your ass. If I see you around me or my boyfriend again, one of us will give you more than a broken nose. Understand?" She hissed, and he nodded quickly. "Get the fuck up and out of my sight." He scrambled up and took off to his car. "Damn, Babe, I didn't even see that much blood when *I* broke his nose! Good job!" She held up a hand for a high five and he chuckled, high fiving her.

"Lean down." Joyce demanded, shaking out a wet paper towel she'd run back in for. Mike did as he was told and she wiped at his lip. "I don't think you need stitches this time."

"So, uh, who hit who first?" Hopper asked.

"Troy." The two chorused.

"I saw him hit Mike, that's why I got up so fast." El told him.

"Okay. We should probably get some ice to put on that." Hopper pointed to his own eye and Mike nodded in agreement.

"Could you two follow us to our house?" Joyce asked. "We wanted to ask you something but I'd rather help him first."

"I'm fine." Mike told her, waving her off. He winced a little when he gave her a smile and his lip started bleeding again. She wiped at it

again.

"No, and don't smile yet it'll bleed more." She huffed. "I'm gonna get the rest of our food to go and meet you guys back here." She left without another word. Hopper looked at the couple and shrugged, following her closely. Mike and El looked at each other.

"Are you okay?" She asked him, wrapping an arm around his back and looking up at him.

"Yeah." He nodded. "He just... kept talking shit about you and... and started talking about Raven and- God, I don't even remember what I said to make him punch me but it felt so fucking good to punch *him*."

"Satisfying, right?" She asked and he snorted, nodding.

Twenty minutes later, they sat around the Hopper kitchen eating the rest of their food in mostly silence, until Hopper nudged Joyce and then looked at the couple across from them. She made a face and he leaned over and whispered in her ear.

"Oh yeah!" She exclaimed with a quiet laugh. "So, kids-"

"We're not kids." El replied with a grin.

"Anyways, *kids*, we wanted to ask you something very important." She said.

"We're listening." Mike wiggled his eyebrows and Hopper snorted.

"Okay, I'm not sure I want someone that does *that* to be my best man."

"What's wrong with- Wait, what?" Mike choked on his own spit and coughed a little, wide eyed.

"I wanted to ask if you'd be my best man at our wedding." Hopper said.

"And if you would be my maid of honor." Joyce said to El with a smile.

"Why not Will? Or Jonathan?" Mike croaked.

"Well, Will is going to walk me down the aisle." Joyce told him. "And Jonathan and I are gonna dance together- obviously me and Will are too, but it'd be like they're both giving me away to Jim like a father does his daughter."

"Oh." Mike nodded. "You really want *me* to be your best man?" Mike asked. El was frozen in surprise. She'd expected to be in the bridal party but not as maid of honor- which, honestly, El is the obvious choice for it, but it still surprised her. "I mean, I'm gonna look like Barney threw up on my head by then." Hopper laughed at that and El snorted, rolling her eyes at him and standing up to hug her mom.

"I'd love to be your maid of honor, mom." She said, hugging her tight. Joyce grinned at her.

"I want you and your Barney puke hair to be my best man." Hopper confirmed.

"Wow, uh... Okay then, yeah, I'd be honored to do that." He picked up the melting bag of ice and plopped it on his face and held out a hand to Hopper, who chuckled and shook his hand.

"Hey, I thought you guys were going out to eat lunch." Will said, walking in with Jonathan behind him.

"We were, but uh..." El looked at Mike, who turned to Will and waved. "There was an altercation between Mike and dick nose slut waffle named Troy." Mike finally lost it at the insult, nearly falling out of his chair laughing as he realized what she'd actually called Troy earlier, having been too pissed to pay it any mind.

## 38. Chapter 37

This is a long one! I don't know for sure how many more chapters we'll have, but no more than 50, I hope. I'm still continuing with the series once it's done, though!

There is some, uh, adult things happening in this chapter (I'll put a little warning in case you want to skip it, which I recommend cause idk wtf I'm doing in THAT department. I'm an adult virgin! I'm 18 and the guys where I live are all dicks so fuck them but not fuck them. Also never had a boyfriend but that's not by choice- ANYWAYS) they don't do the do yet but they do stuff.

This is an extra long chapter for my absence, lots of shit has been happening irl and it seems like every time I sat down to write (anything, not just this) I'd get some bad news and boom, inspiration and motivation to write just went bye bye.

Honestly, the last couple chapters will probably be kinda long-or longer than usual at least.

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**Friday, December 29, 2017**

"I leave for not even a full twenty four hours and you get in a fight? You really are my son." Went said, poking and prodding at Mike's bruised face. Mike scowled at him.

"Really? I didn't notice that we look exactly alike."

"I think he looks cool!" Richie said, as he walked by them to the bathroom. "You look like a badass."

"I don't *feel* like a badass." Mike replied, grabbing Went's wrists and looking at him seriously. "*Stop.*"

"Sorry." Went snorted. "What did the little fuck even say to start this fight?" He asked.

"I'm not repeating it." Mike shook his head. "I know it's only been like

a day, but it's almost on repeat in my head, the way he said it, the names he called her- it pisses me off. I know none of what he said is true, but that doesn't make it any better."

"I know." Went squeezed his shoulder. "I'm glad you defended her- I haven't known her long but I know she's a great girl and I'm glad you've got her." Mike smiled at him. "Don't let this one go."

"I don't plan on it." He replied with a grin. Went grinned back at him.

"Where's El?" Richie asked, coming back in.

"I don't know, she disappeared about an hour ago." Mike told him.

"I think she's asleep, actually." Eddie called from the living room, "I walked by your room and heard snoring."

"Fuck, don't tell her you heard that or she'll die for like an hour and then hit you." Mike told him.

"You must've tired her out last night, then, Mikey boy." Richie said, grinning and wiggling his eyebrows. Mike furrowed his.

"The hell are you talking about?"

"You can't tell me you two didn't bang last night- I heard it." Mike's eyes nearly popped out of his head and his cheeks turned red.

"We didn't!" He choked out. Went face palmed and shook his head, walking into the living room.

"Then why the fuck did I hear *Oh, Mike* about a hundred times last night?"

"We weren't having sex, Richie." Mike told him. Richie crossed his arms and gave Mike a look. "We weren't!"

"Then what were you doing?"

"Not having sex, that's what." Mike replied. "I don't *have* to tell you what we were doing, Dick." Richie snorted.

"Whatever you say, big bro." Mike rolled his eyes and headed upstairs. El was definitely asleep, her soft snores able to be heard in the silent hallway. He shut the door quietly behind him and crawled onto the bed with her, laying on his stomach. She rolled closer to him almost immediately, throwing a leg over his ass.

"That's not where I was hoping my leg would end up." She muttered sleepily. He snorted.

"Speaking of, Richie may or may not have heard us last night." She opened her eyes and stared at him for a couple seconds.

"Are you serious?" She squeaked. He nodded.

"Yep, sadly. He was all like *you can't tell me you two didn't bang last night, I heard Oh Mike about a hundred times.*" El covered her face. "So, next time, either be a little quieter or-"

"There is no next time as long as there is someone other than us in this house." She said, poking his nose. "Or any house for that matter."

"Hey, you started it!" He replied, poking her nose back. "What about dust mites, do those count as someone being in the house?"

"Shoot me."

"No!" She tried to get up but he grabbed her and pulled her closer to him, wrapping his legs around hers. She chuckled.

"What are you, a koala?" She asked, looking at him.

"Yes."

"Let me up, I've gotta pee but I'll come right back." He whined a little but did as he was asked. She came back a couple minutes later and plopped back down beside him.

"What kind of cake do you want for your birthday?" She asked. He shrugged.

"It doesn't matter, I like anything, really."

"If I let Dustin and Richie put Pepto-Bismol and Vegemite in it will you still eat it?" He scrunched his nose up at the thought.

"Nah, they can have it all for themselves." She snorted. They laid in silence for a few minutes, before El said,

"You know, dad still got you something even though you told him not to." Mike groaned and rolled his eyes.

"Your dad is a stubborn ass."

"I'm well aware of the fact." Mike chuckled. "I also know that *you* are very stubborn too, so I have many stubborn men on my hands." He gasped and put a hand over his heart playfully and she laughed.

"What'd he get me?" He asked, wiggling his eyebrows. She giggled, shaking her head at him.

"I'm not telling."

"WHAT IS THIS I HEAR? MIKE PUNCHED TROY?" Max shrieked at the top of her lungs as she, Lucas and Dustin just barged into the room. Mike gave them a flat look, dropping his hand back onto the bed.

"You look badass." Dustin said with a grin.

"I look like a slightly burnt noodle." Everyone stared at him for a couple seconds, and silently, El brought her phone out and typed something. All at once, they got a notification-

*Eleven has changed Noddle's name to Slightly Burnt Noodle.*

Everyone started laughing, including Mike.

"I love how we all managed to stay quiet while El did that." Max laughed.

"Same, that was great." Mike chuckled. "But no, I won't tell you what was said. I'm keeping that to myself til the day I die."

"Was it really *that* bad?" El asked, sitting up on her elbows.

"Honestly, you probably wouldn't think so, but to me, yeah. And not just what he said about Raven, but what he called you. I'll never repeat it." He shrugged slightly.

"Troy's just a dick-" Lucas started.

"Dick nose slut waffle." El said, matter of factly.

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Sunday, December 31, 2017

***WARNING: AdULT cOnTeNt AhEaD! (ends a little after the next line. after it it's more mentioning than anything else)***

"Hey Mikey?" El asked sweetly as she turned over in bed to face him. He'd been replying to birthdays messages for a few minutes, and she was waiting for him to wake up fully. He put his phone down and looked at her with a smile.

"Hm?"

"It's your birthday, correct?" She asked. He raised an eyebrow and nodded. "And you know how I said that we're never gonna do anything with someone else in the house with us?" He nodded again. "Well guess what?"

"What?"

"We're alone, and will be for a few hours." He raised an eyebrow and sat up on his elbows.

"Do you mean...?"

"Not all the way, not yet. I don't think I'm ready for that just yet. But we can do other things." She grinned at him.

"I don't think I am, either, honestly." He told her and grinned back. "What do you have in mind?" She kicked the covers off her legs and swung one leg over his, straddling him. He looked at her face and his eyes flickered down her body. She was only wearing a tank top and minion underwear. "Nice underwear."

"Shut up." She pinched his side and he snorted. "I'm gonna let that slide since it's your birthday." She leaned down and kissed him on the lips, placing her hands on each of his cheeks. He rested his hands on her hips, kissing her back eagerly.

They made out like that for a while, until El moved against him. His breath caught in his throat and she grinned. He gave her a look and she did it again, and his eyes grew dark.

"Shirt?" She asked. He nodded, and instead of taking *his* off, she took *hers* off in one swift motion. He choked on a breath, not expecting it. He chuckled a little. "What?"

"I didn't expect *that*." She smiled, shrugging.

"I know they're not the biggest but I figured you'd-"

"El, I don't care about that." He waved her off, sitting up and causing her to fall into his lap. She let out a little noise at the sudden movement and grabbed his shoulders. "Every part of you is perfect to me, okay?" She smiled again and pecked him on the lips.

"I love you."

"I love you too." He smiled softly.

"But, right now I'm supposed to be taking care of you, not the other way around, now off with the shirt." She grabbed the hem and pulled it over his head, tossing it somewhere. He chuckled and gripped her hips. She tangled her fingers in his hair and traced his jaw with her lips, nipping at it as she went. She could feel the goosebumps that popped up on his skin from it, and smiled to herself. She gently grabbed the hair on the side of his head and tilted his head, bringing her lips to his neck. He let out a stuttering sigh.

She *tried* not to leave any marks on his neck, opting to go for the collar bone and chest, knowing their friends would make fun of them for hours. Once she was satisfied, she kissed him on the lips again and grinded down on him. She'd felt him growing harder the entire time, and she decided now was probably a good time to do something about it.

She sat up, moving over him, and he opened his darkened eyes.

"Can I?" She asked, gesturing to the bulge in his pants.

"Uh, if you want to."

"I want to." She assured him, nodding as she slid her hand down his chest and stomach, hand finding what she was looking for and rubbing him over his pants. He let out an almost whimper, biting his lips at her touch.

"I haven't-" She reached her hand inside his pants, using her other hand to pull at his pants and brought him out into the open, stroking him.

"Wow." She said, grinning at him. "I was correct about the ring finger being longer than your index finger thing..." He chuckled, which quickly turned into a moan.

"No one but me has... in a while." he told her, "I might, uh- you know- sooner rather than later."

"Don't worry if you do, I understand." She said, running her thumb over the head, noting how he twitched in her hand when she did, doing it again every couple strokes. His hands gripped her hips as she leaned forward, bringing her lips to his as her hand worked between them.

Her steady pace never faltered, only speeding up every once in a while, just to hear his low moans. She tightened her grip, stroking him quickly. He stiffened under her, moaning her name as he released into her hand.

"Fuck." He whispered, head dropping back onto a pillow. She chuckled and reached across him with her clean hand, grabbing a bunch of tissues from the box that had conveniently been sitting there. "Where'd that come from?"

"I put it there." She said, wiping her hand off.

"Oh." He let out a sigh. "That was, uh... that was good."

"Was it?" She asked. "I haven't done that in a while either." She said sheepishly.

"No, no, you did good. Great, even. Jesus." He chuckled, fixing his pants. "I wanna sleep, but it's your turn now." He wiggled his eyebrows at her. She snorted.

"You don't have to, Mike." She told him, shrugging.

"I want to." He sat up, gently pushing her off him and leaning over her, kissing her on the lips as his hand moved down her side.

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"I knew you were a good kisser, but goddamn." El breathed, chest heaving as Mike plopped down beside her. He snorted, cheeks turning pink, and shrugged. "I love your fingers and your mouth-confirmed."

"Oh my God." He laughed, wrapping an arm around her and pulling her close. "You're crazy."

"But a good crazy, right?" She asked, looking up at him.

"The best crazy." She smiled and kissed him.

The two eventually went back to sleep, cuddled together under the blanket. El was glad she put her shirt back on, because an hour or two later, Richie and Holly ran into the room and jumped on Mike, screaming happy birthday.

"God, you two sleep forever!" Holly groaned, falling onto her back at the end of the bed. Richie sat back on his heels next to her and looked at the two as Mike sat up, scratching his head.

"You two... are *loud*." He replied. El giggled a little, scooting closer to Mike.

"Don't go, you're warm." She mumbled. He chuckled, pushing a strand of hair out of her face.

"I'm not getting up yet." He told her. She nodded. "Thanks for the birthday wishes, though. I wish you hadn't given me a heart attack,

though." Richie snickered.

"You better get up, though, dad got our favorite lunch food." Holly said, sitting up. Richie eyed her when she said dad and grinned to himself.

"Did he? What'd he get?" He asked.

"Subway." Mike practically fell off the bed the second he heard *sub*. Holly cackled and Richie snorted, making sure Mike didn't actually fall.

"Mike!" El whined as he put a shirt on.

"I love you but I love subway too." He told her, darting out of the room.

"His love for Subway confuses me."

"I didn't even know he liked Subway." El said, sitting up and scratching her head. Holly went after Mike and Richie smirked at El.

"Your shirts on backwards." He told her. She flipped him off.

"Your love for Eddie is as obvious as my shirt being backwards." She replied, grinning at him.

"Fuck off." He grumbled, standing up. He held a hand out to her to help her up but she shook her head.

"I gotta use the bathroom and do something to my hair. I'll be down in a few." She told him. He nodded and went on his way, yelling something about spaghetti. She shook her head at him and got up.

Ten minutes later Mike was already halfway done with his sub, and there was a Hershey birthday cake sitting in front of him with a bunch of candles on it.

"Jesus Christ, I said numbers, not single candles." El said, rolling her eyes. Nancy chuckled.

"I let Richie be in charge of that so blame him. Steve and I just

bought the alcohol." She shrugged.

"How much did you buy?" Mike asked, mouthful. El poked him in the back of the head.

"That's for us to know and you to not." Steve said.

"That's not how that goes." Eddie deadpanned.

"That was the point, Spaghetti." Steve said.

"Hey no, that's my thing." Richie said, flicking Steve on the shoulder.

"Calm down, children." Went said, holding his hands in the air. "Eat your Subway then worry about Alcohol. Richard, don't *even* think about it." He gave Richie a look, who pouted.

"Not even a sip?"

"No!" Went, Mike and Nancy chorused.

"Fine! Buzzkills!"

"You're fifteen, Richie." Mike rolled his eyes.

"I'll be sixteen in march!" He retorted.

"Still five years away til you're legal. You can go to parties and do it, but I'm not letting you." Went told him, shaking his head. "I better not hear about parties, though, or I'll beat your ass."

"You won't."

"Wanna bet? Come here." Went lifted a hand like he was gonna smack Richie and Richie ran in the living room giggling.

"Christ.

---

## 7 PM

"When can I have my birthday cake? I've been waiting for hours." Mike whined as he buttoned the dress pants Nancy had thrown at

him a few minutes before. El snorted, rubbing her lips together as she put on lipstick, running a hand through her hair. She walked out of the bathroom and put her hands on her hips.

"When everyone gets here. The cake looks amazing though, doesn't it?" She grinned. He nodded. "We're just waiting on Dustin, Max, Lucas and their parents." She told him. "Will, Jonathan and my parents are downstairs, and dad is just itching to give you his present." Mike muttered to himself about *stubborn ass Hopper* and she giggled. He finished getting dressed and El handed him her phone, explaining, "I want to take a picture of us so I can post it." He nodded and took the picture, her smiling her beautiful smile and him grinning wide, all teeth. She laughed. "You're so cute."

"No you." He handed the phone back to her and kissed his cheek. She captioned the picture,

*Happy 21st birthday to this doof, I love you, you Slightly Burnt Noodle.*

Max posted a picture of her giving him a piggy back ride from back when they were sixteen, saying,

*Happy 21st bday to this dickheaded baby giraffe who still can't walk correctly. Love you!*

Dustin and Lucas posted the exact same picture with the exact same caption (both claiming they hadn't planned it, when everyone knows they did). The picture was a distorted baby picture of Mike, with the caption,

*He still looks like this, happy birthday Paladin!*

Will posted a picture of them back from kindergarten, captioning it,

*Happy birthday to my first ever friend, sixteen years is a long time knowing someone!*

There were multiple birthday wishes on Instagram and Facebook, but Mike's personal favorite was Went's, who posted a picture of himself, Mike, Nancy, Richie and Holly, captioning it with (after asking permission of course),

*Happy birthday to my oldest boy, you've been through a lot lately and I hope you have an amazing day, don't get too fucked up, you may be a stick like your brother, but you're both heavy little shits and I'm getting too old to carry you to bed. Love, dad.*

---

Once everyone arrived, Dustin and Max screaming happy birthday at the top of their lungs, everyone sang happy birthday to Mike and Jonathan tried to smash his face in the cake but Mike expected it, and ducked out of the way. They all stuffed their faces with cake, and decided (mainly Dustin) to bring out the karaoke machine, finally.

Nancy and Steve had brought out the alcohol, and Mike was actually drinking- beer, at least, he wasn't too sure about the vodka. It was tempting, though. Dustin, Lucas and Max sang the most, singing and dancing to older music, and early 2000s. Richie sang a couple songs using his voices, but never really *sang*.

"I think Mike and El should do Timber." Will said randomly, while no one was using the karaoke machine.

"But I can't rap, we all know this." Mike said.

"Who said you'd be rapping?" El asked, winking at him. He raised an eyebrow at her.

"Okay... So I'll sing and you'll rap?" He asked, standing next to her as Will started the song. She nodded. He chuckled a little and started singing, "*It's going down, I'm yelling timber- You better move, you better dance- Let's make a night, you won't remember- I'll be the one, you won't forget!*"

*"The bigger they are, the harder they fall- This biggity boy's a diggity dog- I have 'em like Miley Cyrus, clothes off- Twerking in their bras and thongs, timber- Face down, booty up, timber- That's the way we like the what, timber- I'm slicker than an oil spill- She say she won't, but I bet she will, timber!"* El barely kept from laughing at the look on Mike's face. He tried to continue singing but started laughing, clapping his hands.

"That was great, Jesus." He laughed. She giggled and gasped a little, stopping the music.

"We haven't given you your *presents* yet!" She squealed. He blinked at the pitch and laughed, shaking his head.

That took about an hour, because Lucas, Max and Dustin, being as drunk as they are, decided they needed to explain the meaning of their gifts and it too at least fifteen minutes each. Hoppers big gift was a a beanie and jacket he had made with Hawkins police on it, which was meant as a little joke but Mike loved it anyways.

A little after ten thirty, Mike got a text from someone he did not expect. The younger adults and teens had gone outside to watch the early fireworks and Jonathan and Steve started a small fire for them to sit around.

(10:36 PM) Mom: As my duty as a mother, I wish you a happy birthday and New Year, Michael.

Mike froze mid sentence as he read the message. Will frowned when he realized Mike wasn't talking anymore.

"Mike?" He asked. Mike didn't move a muscle. He poked his shoulder and Mike blinked, looking up at him. Mike held his phone up to him.

"Am I reading this right? Is this from my *mom*?" He asked, narrowing his eyes slightly. Will gaped as he read the message, and looked at Mike. Will did *not* like the look in his eyes.

"Uh, yeah, it does."

"What's going on over here?" Nancy asked, walking over with Jonathan. Mike chuckled humorlessly, turned, and promptly threw the beer bottle in his hand as hard as he could at the fence. It shattered, the sound causing multiple people to look their way.

"What the fuck?" Jonathan asked, backing up from him slightly, as if Mike was gonna do something else.

"Fuck the beer, where's the vodka?"

---

"El, put your jacket back on, you'll get sick." Hopper told her, tossing her jacket at her.

"Hoes never get cold." She replied. Max found that hilarious and cackled into Lucas' shoulder. Mike looked at El with a raised eyebrow.

"You're a hoe?" He asked. She nodded. He gasped a little.

"Same." He whispered

"Let's be hoes together." She held a hand out to him and he nodded, grabbing it and pulling her close to him.

"Hey Ellie?" Mike asked, poking her knee. She looked down at him.

"Hm?"

"When we have kids, beat my ass if I'm ever an asshole to them or try to disown them, okay?" He told her with a slight pout. She put a hand on his shoulder and squeezed lightly.

"I'll beat anyone and everyone's ass... okay? Including yours." She promised.

"Thank you. I don't wanna be like my mom."

"Oh he's drunk drunk." Steve snorted, later, as he, Went and Hopper watched as Mike danced, singing at the top of his lungs while the others sang along as background singers. Despite nearly being drunk off his ass, he was doing a pretty good job.

"And I-EEEE-I! WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOUUUUUU!"

"Sing it baby!" El yelled, clapping her hands.

"Guys, we have one minute until midnight!" Lucas yelled. "Find your lovers!"

"You too, Richard!" Mike yelled.

"MICHAEL." Richie shrieked. Went and Eddie looked at Richie, who looked between them, chuckling nervously. Went winked at Richie and walked away. Richie wouldn't look at Eddie.

"Ellie come here." Mike said sweetly, pulling her into his lap. "I know I'm drunk as fuck, but like, I love you." He told her seriously.

"Same, I love you too." She pecked him on the lips.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, you gotta wait til midnight, dummies!" Dustin said, patting their heads. They stuck their tongues out at him.

"Ten seconds!" Max shrieked.

"Nine!"

"Eight!"

"Seven!"

"Six!"

"Uh, Richie?" Eddie asked. Richie bit his lip.

"Five!"

"Four!"

"Three!"

"Two!"

"One! Happy New Year!"

"Oh, fuck it." Richie put his hands on either side of Eddie's face and kissed him. Eddie didn't waste a second, kissing him back.

Mike and El kissed for 0.02 seconds and hugged, giggling together, and Mike saw Richie and Eddie kissing.

"YES RICHIE! GET IT!" He yelled, cackling. Richie flipped him off but didn't let go of Eddie.

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(1:12 AM) Slightly Burnt Noodle- God

(1:12) Slightly Burnt Noodle- is real

(1:13) Dick- mike where are you

(1:13) Eleven- of curse god is rael we togehter

(1:13) Eleven- uor a gdo nodole

(1:15) Slightly Burnt Noodle- I feel i teh bahtub

(1:15) Slightly Burnt Noodle- i has to prr and fel on m asr lmal

(1:16) Slightly Burnt Noodle- omg ellie ura goddeSS

(1:17) Eddie- mike is your dick out, cus if so I'm not coming to help you out th tub.

(1:17) Slightly Burnt Noodle- wow dedie tak me on a date first

(1:17) Slightly Burnt Noodle- i fell afte i zipped up dw

(1:18)Slightly Burnt Noodle- ha im gona b more of a burnded nodolee tomorrow

(1:18) Slightly Burnt Noodle- my booty don hurt naw but ir wil soon

---

"Mike, I know I told you to have fun-" Steve started, but Mike interrupted him, poking him on the nose.

"No, you told me not to kick an armadillo." He said matter of factly. Steve stared at him.

"You're so gonna hate yourself in the morning, kid." Hopper chuckled, shaking his head. Mike pointed at him.

"Who said I didn't hate myself already? Just kidding. I'm going to bed." He said. Mike fell onto the couch and curled up into a ball next to El, resting his head on her ankle. "Night night."

"Goodnight." Hopper said. Steve gave him a weird look.

"How much did he drink?" He asked as the two walked into the kitchen, where Richie, Eddie, Went, Joyce and Nancy were sitting. Dustin and Jonathan were passed out in arm chairs, and Will was on one end of the couch with Mike and El, passed out as well- even though he only drank two beers. Max and Lucas had gone home hours ago with his parents.

"A lot." Richie said. "I saw him drink like six shots and a whole cup of

vodka."

"And you didn't think to stop him?" Nancy asked, crossing her arms and raising her brows at him. Richie shrugged.

"Seems like he needed it. I've never seen Mike laugh so much."

"On that note, I think everyone should head to bed. We have multiple twenty one year olds to take care of in the morning." Went said, poking Richie and Eddie in the backs. "Holly has been in bed for an hour already, and she's out like a light. Not sure how with all you loud people."

"You'll get used to it." Joyce said, shrugging. She and Hopper attempted to wake El up to tell her goodbye, and barely got an I love you out of her, and headed off to their own house.

---

**Mike falling in the tub was inspired by my dad and my dad actually hurt himself because he's a big dumb alcoholic idiot :D**

## **39. Chapter 38**

Damn, it's been a while.

Five months and a week. Big oof.

I apologize.

Really though, I have many excuses as to why but damn I should've gotten something out months ago, so I'm sooooo sorry! I tried to make this one pretty long XD. I hope you guys like it!

As of right now there WILL be 45 chapters of this only.

The next chapter is probably the last of them in Hawkins for now- at least one more in the story though, as we've still got the Jopper wedding which of course takes place in Hawkins.

With that said, enjoy some (rare) sibling time between the Wheeler/Toziers! As well as some adorable Mileven moments and Mike and Joyce have a moment because Mike is just that future son in law.

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**Monday, January 1, 2018**

"Can you people be any louder?" Mike whined.

"I hate my whole ass life right now." El grumbled.

It's nearing three in the afternoon and the couple are just now waking up.

"Mike, do you hate your life too?" Hopper joked. Mike nodded. "Or are you really just kidding? Like you said last night?"

"Huh?" Mike scratched his head.

"You told me last night you hate yourself and then said just kidding and went to sleep on El's ankle."

"I don't remember that." Mike replied. "Also, El, your ankles are not comfortable to sleep on at all."

"Shut your face." She replied, standing up and stretching. "I need a shower."

"Same." Mike said, following suit and cringed a little. "What the fuck happened to my ass last night?"

"Well," Eddie started. "You had to take a piss and somehow fell in the bathtub? Still wondering how that happened, actually."

"You pulled the curtain down and everything, Michael." Nancy said, pointing at him.

"Oops."

"Oops." She mocked and he flipped her off.

"Apparently, you and my daughter are both hoes." Hopper said, grinning.

"What?" El yelled, then covered her own ears.

"Christ, El, tone it down a little." Will whined.

"I told you to put on a jacket last night and you told me hoes never get cold and then Mike said he was a hoe too, so I think you two need to have a little chat." The two looked at each other weird. Mike put a hand on El's shoulder.

"Let's take a shower and sleep for the rest of the day, and talk about it tomorrow."

"Sounds good." She said, nodding in agreement. As they started up the stairs, Mike turned around with a hand in the air.

"Wait a minute." He walked into the kitchen, eyebrows raised. "I distinctly remember you two kissing last night, or was I that fucked up?" He asked Richie and Eddie.

"You were that fucke—" Richie started but Eddie flicked his shoulder.

"We kissed." Eddie deadpanned, holding their intertwined fingers together up for all to see.

"Good job Eddie." Mike clapped playfully.

"Hey! How do you know it wasn't me? Cause I went fuck it like you said El did and kissed him." Richie said, sticking tongue out.

"Good job Richie. Good job both of you for getting your shit together. Now, goodnight." Mike practically dragged himself up the stairs and threw himself down next to a half asleep El. "My whole ass ass hurts."

"Does your face not hurt?" She asked. "And of course it hurts, when you hurt yourself when you're drunk it hurts twice as much when you're sober." He raised an eyebrow at her. "Okay, I'm just a wimp, shut up." He chuckled. "Honestly, though, you look like Tiffany's boyfriends kids got into her makeup again."

"Whom?"

"Tiffany." She said, tapping his cheek. "My old roommate who has like thirty kids."

"I thought they were her boyfriends."

"They are but she had one with him. It was a boy, he's cute but I think she cheated on him."

"Tea."

"Mike!" She giggled and he laughed. "So, you wanna shower first or me? Or... we could shower together?" He raised an eyebrow at her.

"We've only been together a month, Janie." He said, grinning. She glared at him and slapped his shoulder. "Moving fairly quickly, aye?" She gave him a look and he snorted. "Kidding, kidding. Yeah we can take one together- just don't let me fall again."

"We'll see." She snickered.

---

"Mike has a giant bruise on his ass." El said the second she and and

said man walked into Lucas' house.

"El!" Mike whined.

"I would think so, he said he'd be even more of a bruised noodle last night." Max snickered.

"When did I say that?" He asked.

"Dude you texted the chat saying God is real after you fell on your ass." Lucas said, raising an eyebrow at him. "Have you really not looked?"

"Uh, no?" Mike shrugged. He and El squeezed onto the couch next to the couple, Dustin and Will sitting in armchairs.

"The real question is, how does El know he has a giant bruise?" Dustin wiggled his eyebrows and they flipped him off in unison. Mike took his phone out of his pocket and started looking through the texts, turning red. El giggled beside him.

"God, we were so drunk." She laughed. He snorted.

"Mike turns into Richie when he's drunk, it looks like." Will said. "At least in text."

"Speaking of Richie- tomorrow is their last full day in Hawkins, I kinda want to throw him a little party or something." Mike said. "Because I know he's dreading going back, and it could be something to celebrate the smart little shit getting to graduate a year early."

"You're telling us this why?" Dustin asked, confused.

"Because I need your help to pull it off? Duh." Mike rolled his eyes.

"No need to be rude, Michael."

"How am I being rude?"

"You rolled your eyes at me!"

"Jesus Christ."

---

**Tuesday, January 2, 2018**

The next morning, Mike managed to convince his brother and sisters to go out- first to the mall, then out to eat, see a movie, and probably go to Walmart to *shoot the shit* as Richie said.

"I wonder what dad's been doing." Richie said, as the four walked around the mall. "Fucker is never at Nancy's, where the hell has he been going?"

"Might be getting it on with someone." Nancy said with a snort.

"He's not like our moms." Richie said. "As much as my mom has fucked around on him, I don't think he'd stoop to her level."

"True, sorry."

"It's fine, Nance. I get what you mean, though." He shrugged. "Oooh, it's Hot Topic-al."

"What the fuck." Mike made a face.

"It's from Supernatural, fucker, if you watched more than two seconds of it you'd know." Richie replied, plundering through shirts.

"Who even calls it that?" Mike asked.

"A gay angel." Holly replied. Mike looked at Nancy, who's eyes were about to pop out of her head.

"Okay, well, while you little demons look around over here, we're gonna go look somewhere... else." Nancy said, grabbing Mike's arm and walking to the other side of the store. "Oh, they sell makeup here?" She grinned. Mike snorted.

"I feel like I'd be one of the good demons." Holly told Richie.

"Me too, I'd be a gayer version of Crowley." He scratched his chin. "Don't be like Ruby, though. I won't allow it."

"Uh uh, she nasty." Richie snickered at that.

"Are you happier living with Nancy and Steve?" Richie asked her, grabbing a shirt and throwing it across his shoulder.

"Lot's more." She replied, writing her name on one of the pillows. "Ha, this one has a devil emoji. I miss my mom, though." She said, sighing. "But she wasn't good to me anymore, not like she used to be, at least. I asked if I could try her lipstick on one time and she flat out said no and slammed the door in my face."

"God, I hate that woman. Runs in the family, I guess. But you and Nancy are smart enough to not follow in their footsteps."

"Mhm." She agreed.

"You still wanting to color your hair?" Nancy asked Mike.

"Fuck yeah!" He grinned.

"What about a haircut?" She raised an eyebrow at him. He sniffed and turned his head away from her, poking at a ball of slime. She snorted. "I take that as a no, then."

"Maybe a trim. Just a little."

"Okay, you big baby. Just a little." She chuckled.

"Richie do you wanna dye your hair?" Mike called.

"Fuck yeah!" Richie yelled back.

"What color?" Nancy asked.

"Uh, whatever Mikey's doing." He replied.

"Purple it is then." She grinned. "After this we need to go to Sally's so I can get what I need."

"That place is so expensive." Mike said, continuing to poke at the slime. "Slime is also weird."

"Are you still drunk?" She asked, raising an eyebrow. He snorted and shook his head. "And yeah, they're expensive but worth it."

"If you say so." Mike muttered. "I'm gonna buy this. El loves slime."

"That's what she said!" Richie screamed from the other side of the store.

"Richie!" Nancy and Holly scolded while Mike laughed to himself. Richie cackled.

"I'm gonna buy this IT shirt and have this kid who has my face on his body on *my* body."

"Dammit Richie who dropped you on your head as a baby?" Mike asked, holding the bag with the slime in it.

"Probably you, honestly." Richie replied. Mike made a face.

"True."

"I remember you dropped him on the couch one day when he was like two and he laughed so hard he rolled off the couch." Nancy said.

"Oops." Mike laughed.

"Dick." Richie poked him, walking by him to go to checkout.

"You're the one who rolled off it! I didn't make you do that." Richie stuck his tongue out at him. Mike rolled his eyes and snorted, walking over to Holly. "See anything you want?" He asked her. She shrugged.

"Not the biggest fan of Hot Topic-al." She replied. He rolled his eyes at that but chuckled.

"Well, if you find anything you like in any store, let me know and I'll get it for you." He told her.

"Really?"

"Within reason." He gave her a look and she smirked.

"So you'd buy me a hoverboard if I wanted one?"

"Hell no, those things blow up."

"God, you sound like such a dad." She chuckled.

"Well, someone has to." He shrugged. She rolled her eyes.

"And someone has to play the teenage girl!"

"You're not a teen yet!" He exclaimed.

"I will be in May." She stuck her tongue out. He mocked her and she laughed. Mike's phone started going off and he pulled it out, seeing that El was face timing him. He answered with a grin.

"Mike!" She exclaimed. "I need your help, where are you?"

"Hot Topic, why?" He asked. "Everything okay?"

"No! Will keeps twerking on me and I need you to hide me." She was in the mall, but he couldn't tell where, glancing behind her.

"Oh, God. Where are you?" He asked, laughing.

"Like two stores down from you."

"Okay, well, hurry it up because Nancy and Richie are almost done buying their shit."

"Okay." She gave him a big grin and hung up. Five seconds later all he saw was pink and glitter.

"El." Holly said. "Why are you wearing a wedding dress?"

"It's not a wedding dress." She replied.

"It looks like a wedding dress." Holly said, raising an eyebrow. "Are you proposing to my brother?"

"What, no!" El shook her head, glancing at her boyfriend who was just staring at her, looking her up and down. "It... It's a bridesmaid dress that just *looks* like a wedding dress. It's pink, wedding dresses are white."

"Coulda fooled me!"

"Well, well, well." Richie said as he and Nancy walked up to them.  
"You're gonna catch flies, Michelle!"

"Ooh, are you and Joyce picking out dresses today?" Nancy asked. El nodded.

"I, uh..." Mike started and looked down at the bag in his hands. "I got you slime." He said, holding it out to her. She grinned and tried to hold in a laugh but failed, giggling like a little girl at her boyfriend. The siblings started laughing as well while Mike grinned dopily and blushed.

"You're too cute." Mike just shrugged in response.

"Do you think Joyce would be cool if we came with you to pick out dresses?" Holly asked.

"Yeah, I wanna try on some tuxes or something. I'm *bored*." Richie whined. Mike came out of his daze and smacked Richie upside the head.

"Bullshit, you're bored. All you have done is run around the store talking about Supernatural."

"Oh my God, you watch Supernatural?" El nearly shrieked. Richie grinned and nodded.

"Me and Holly both do."

"Oh my God, come on." She grabbed their hands and dragged them out of the store. Mike sighed and looked at Nancy, who raised an eyebrow at him. He shrugged and the two followed, making sure the younger siblings paid for anything they might've had, and made their way towards David's bridal.

"Will, if you twerk on me again I'm telling mom about your boyfriend." El was saying, kicking Will lightly in the ass. He stood up quickly and turned to glare at her.

"Don't do that."

"*Don't do that.*" She mocked.

"Alright, children." Joyce said, waving her hands out of the curtains.  
"I've got my next dress on."

"She's trying on wedding dresses too?" Nancy asked, taking a seat. El nodded, walking to the curtain to open it for her.

"We're trying to get everything done today since you guys won't be back until Spring Break." Will said. "But El and I will have to come back once or twice to help out." El nodded in agreement.

"Ready mom?" El asked.

"Yes. I really, really like this one, guys." She said, and they could hear the giddiness in her voice. El opened the curtain and Joyce walked out, and their jaws dropped. She jumped a little, placing a hand over her heart when she saw how many people were in their little room, laughing at herself. She walked in front of the mirror and smoothed down the front. It was a white, floor length dress, the back flowing out a bit, with thick straps and a heart neckline. The top half of the dress had glitter and lace, the skirt a solid white.

"Holy actual hell, Mama J." Mike said, eyebrows raising. She turned around with a big smile.

"Do you guys like it?" She asked. They nodded in unison.

"Mom, it's... you're beautiful." Will said. She blushed.

"Screw being a princess..." Holly started.

"You're a mother fucking *Queen*." Richie finished. Joyce laughed at that, clapping her hands a little.

"It's not too much?" She asked.

"Do a twirl." El said. Joyce chuckled and did as she was asked, hearing a click and seeing a flash, and saw El had pulled her camera out of nowhere. "That was a good ass picture." She said. Joyce smiled, and then it fell slightly and she sighed.

"It's out of our budget, though." She said, turning to look at herself in the mirror. "With bridesmaid dresses, tuxes..."

"Who all is gonna be in the wedding?" Mike asked, pulling out his phone.

"Um, besides me and Hopper, you, El, my boys, Steve, Jon, Nancy, Max and Holly."

"I'm paying for mine and Holly's, then." Mike said.

"But it's only for one time-"

"Holly can wear it for prom." Mike interrupted, grinning. Holly shrugged.

"I'd be fine with that." She said, laughing.

"I'm joking, Holls." He said.

"I'm not."

"Well, anyways... I'd be glad to help you out, Mama J."

"I don't want you to waste your money on me, Sweetie."

"It's not wasting." Mike shook his head.

"We'll all pitch in some, right Will?" El said, looking at her brother. "Like we can pay for our own clothes, I'm sure Max already thinks she's paying for hers."

"I thought we had to pay for our own *anyways*." Nancy said. El snorted at that.

"I've never seen you look so happy." Mike said. "And I want to continue to see it, you know? So I don't mind at all."

"I'm gonna cry." She said, fanning her face. Mike chuckled and walked over to her, hugging her. She hugged back tightly. "Thank you, Mike."

"Of course."

There was another click and flash, and a little giggle.

"That was a good one too." El said, looking at her camera. Mike rolled his eyes as he pulled away from Joyce, still keeping an arm around her.

"So, since I've picked my dress out... we can figure out the tuxes since we have two boys here to try them on." Joyce grinned up at Mike, who crossed his eyes he rolled them so hard.

"How the hell do you cross your eyes when you roll them?" Will asked.

"Dustin." Was all he said. "Also, there's three guys here- where the hell did Richie go?"

"Right here, mothafuckas!" Richie called, strutting down the hallway in a bright pink, floral suit with a pink top hat on. El immediately started taking pictures of him, the teen posing for her. Nancy and Holly had since gone to look at dresses for mainly springy looking colors, so they were missing out.

"He's having the time of his life, look at him." Mike snickered, glancing at Will who laughed and nodded.

"My turn!" Richie cheered as El handed him the camera, taking his place and beginning to pose like an actual model as he took pictures.

"I'm gonna go change and get measured." Joyce told the two boys, who nodded and grinned at her. She went back through the curtain, and they could faintly hear her voice mix in with another woman.

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An hour or so later, tuxedos and bridesmaid dresses were figured out, and the group ended up going to eat together at McDonalds- Richie's choice as it was a day to celebrate him.

He also really wanted to go to the play pad inside of it but who cares? He and Holly had a ball in there, acting like they were children again.

"Okay, I know it's childish to go in there but look how happy they are going down some silly, hot slide." Nancy said. "I haven't seen Holly smile like that in a while." She looked at her brother- who was sitting

across from her, Joyce, and Will's table- next to his girlfriend, his chin resting in his hand as they talked.

"I haven't seen them so happy in a while either." Will said, nodding towards them. "Since that stuff with... you know who happened, and then his moping around thinking El would never notice him for two years."

"Mike's just had a hard time all around. Both of them have." Joyce added. The two nodded in agreement.

"How do you think Mike's gonna be on *that* day?" Nancy asked. "I'm sure El knows about it, but you know how *he* is."

"It lasts for more like a week or so, it's just horrible on the day." Will said. "Last year, well, it was easier for him, I feel like. He didn't try and fight us off like he normally would, and went to his classes. Max would be the best person to ask, she's always stuck by him around that time."

"I just don't want El to get hurt, you know?" Nancy told him. Will shook his head.

"I don't think he'll hurt her. She's helped him so much already, and he really loves her. If he ever *does* hurt her, I'm pretty sure it'd be a misunderstanding or something."

"Look at the way he's sitting there and staring at her. Like she hung the moon."

El started giggling at the face Mike made, poking his shoulder.

"You should let me take pictures of you." She said, taking a sip of her Coke.

"That doesn't sound creepy at all." He snickered and she rolled her eyes.

"It does, kinda." She shrugged. "But you should."

"I'll break your camera one of these days, as many pictures that you've taken of me."

"Oh shut up. You're literally *the* most gorgeous man I've ever met." Mike's face immediately heated up, his cheeks and the tips of his ears turning red. He shrugged again. "You'll learn how to take a compliment one of these days." She sighed. "But you should let me take pictures of you, you'd be a good model for my assignments." He scoffed at that.

"We'll see. I don't want you to get an F because of my lanky ass." El rolled her eyes and poked his nose.

"I love your lanky body, so shut your face."